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LONGER ENGLISH POEMS

FROM SPENSER TO ALFRED NOYES

EDITED BY

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AUTHOR OF "PRÉCIS WRITING AND PARAPHRASING"
"ENGLISH FOR INTEREST"



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INTRODUCTION

There are many things we cannot understand, and consequently we turn to those people who can interpret them for us. The most difficult thing to realize is life itself, and here it is that poetry finds its proper place in trying to aid us in our attempt to understand life and all that is about us. This it does in terms of feeling and imagination. It is in this interpretation that the spirit of poetry is born, but for it to reach us the poet has to give it bodily form. This he does in rhythmical language and metre.

Some poets and critics have tried to tell us what their poetry is, but poetry, full of wonder and thoughts almost too deep for expression, is hard to define. Add together a number of definitions, and then you may approach the verge of the land of magic casements. Add together every definition of a rose, you are still left without realizing your rose; but see one, and the flash comes on that inward eye.

Dr Johnson declared poetry to be "the art of uniting pleasure with truth by calling Imagination to the help of Reason." [illegible]

this to task when he says, "Poetry has its origin in emotion recollected in tranquillity," for it is only *after* the poetic experience that you can put it into words · it is the same as when you say that something "left you speechless." Simpler, perhaps, are Carlyle's "Poetry we call musical thought" and Shelley's "The expression of the imagination." Dr Bridges has said, "Poetry is an Art—that is, one of the Fine Arts—and, using the word in this recognized sense, all Art is the

Gosse said, "In 1570 there was no poetry of real value being composed in England; in 1590 all the English world was reading *The Faerie Queene*." To-day he is not read. He has been called "the poet's poet," because other poets like Milton and Keats have learned from him much of their craft —for there is a craft of poetry as well as 'divine inspiration.'

We have not yet mentioned what are sometimes called 'schools' of poetry. It is difficult, and often misleading, to fix labels, but it is convenient. By a 'school' of poetry we mean a group of poets of a similar outlook and period. Men regard the world in different ways: times change, and what was once insignificant becomes prevalent everywhere. Tastes in literature vary in different ages English poetry can be divided (as far as you can divide poetry) into two main schools —the Classical (sometimes called the Augustan) and the Romantic. They differ, as we shall see, in what they say and how they say it. When the poet and dramatist Shakespeare wrote he used nature as his parchment and human nature as his ink. He could call mankind to see how

> the floor of heaven
> Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold;

he sang of flowers, of love, of hate, of merriment, and passions that are eternal. Great literature always deals with the permanent things; the flashes of the season and fickle fancies of the passing moment produce literature for the moment. But there are, as Ruskin observed, books for all time as well as books for the hour. Shakespeare and his contemporaries were essentially Romantic in their outlook, full of the spirit of wonder.

Men, however, took their fancies into extreme realms; their language became affected and thus insincere. No insincerity can produce great art. People may like such creations for a season, but they will soon ask for something of more permanence. These poets, whose dread of saying what they meant led them to use forms of thought and speech that were extravagant and often absurd, are called

'the metaphysical poets.' Among them are three religious poets, Vaughan, Herbert, and Crashaw, the last of whom has been called the most mystical of English poets. He also influenced Coleridge in *Christabel.* These poets and others of their style, with poetic conceits dimming real poetic feeling, gave way to the common-sense poetry of Dryden and Pope. Before them, however, came John Milton.

"God-gifted organ voice of England," John Milton stands a lonely figure in our poetry, being the only great poet of his time. "Dark, dark, irrecoverably dark" was much of his life, but his spirit was illumined by a light that shed a radiance over his stern, Puritanic soul. His work is of a religious character, often reflecting his Puritanism. Good life, chastity, nobleness, and courage are marked features of his poems; he and Samson had much in common. *Paradise Lost*, the greatest epic in our language, shows the wonderful control he had over the poet's medium, words. There are faults, of course, but the beauty of the blank verse has made this poem outstanding.

Dryden and Pope are the two chief Classical poets. Their works were based on the Latin poets, and thus they are sometimes called Augustan. Dryden, who was a critic as well as a poet, believed that Denham and Waller had shown the best method of writing English verse. These two poets are now almost forgotten, in spite of Dr Johnson's declaration that Denham was "one of the fathers of English poetry." Precision and polish their poems possess, but there is something lacking. Denham wrote in this way:

> My eye, descending from the hill, surveys
> Where Thames among the wanton valleys strays;
> Thames, the most loved of all the Ocean's sons
> By his old sire, to his embraces runs.

This polished couplet was really a revolt against extravagant language. It aimed at relieving verse of 'conceits,' and, indeed, any ideas which called for any effort of the imagination on the part of the reader.

The metre of the Augustan school is almost always decasyllabic rhyming couplet, split up into five iambs: in other words, ten-syllabled lines, with a long syllable following a short one. The end of the couplet is the end of the sense of that particular portion, and there is the end, too, of the grammatical structure. This can readily be seen in a few lines from Pope's *Essay on Criticism*:

[illegible]

These lines are typical of the hard-and-fast verse of the Classical school of poets, flourishing in what is called the Age of Reason or Common Sense, a designation that is not too good, for there is reason and sound common sense in the Romantic poets. Passion, fervour, deep insight, and emo- [illegible] was "studied through a drawing-room window." The dew of the morning was lovely, but was apt to damp the feet and the ardour of the poet. So died lyric poetry, and in its place reigned the hard-and-fast couplet.

It is a trite saying that one can have too much even of a good thing. Public taste changes with time, but it does not, as a rule, change abruptly. The greatest change came in 1798, but there was a period from about 1720 to 1798 when the 'passing over' became obvious. Picture a river of poetry, with the Classical bank on the one side and the Romantic bank on the opposite side. There is a bridge across the river. On that bridge stands the Transition (the 'going across') poetry, and this poetry cannot be said to be on either bank, yet rests on both. Each of the poets lining the bridge has, so to speak, a foot on each bank. [illegible]

cannot say these poets are Classical or Romantic: they show characteristics of both schools.

Once again Nature had something to say. Thomson, in his *Seasons*, was influenced by Pope in one of his occasional Romantic moods. *The Seasons* was popular and generally admired. People did not jeer at such lovely expressions as,

> Thoughtless of beauty, she was beauty's self,
> Recluse amid the close-embowering woods.

The influence of Spenser was being felt again, and the narrow view of man gradually slipped away: in fine, the ground was being prepared for the real outburst of Romantic poetry. But Johnson and Goldsmith kept to Pope's couplet, though Goldsmith was freer and more sympathetic in his poetry than Pope was. He lacked Pope's invective, and left us pictures painted with deep sincerity.

The chief poets of this period are Gray, Burns, Collins, Blake, and Cowper. Each of them has Romantic tendencies, and each is a poet of note. Often it is in their shorter lyrical poems that the truest Romantic touches are seen, though there are many traces of that spirit in the longer poems of Gray and Burns included in this book. Blake, the visionary poet and artist, told us that we must

> build Jerusalem
> In England's green and pleasant land.

Burns, who is in essence a Romantic, gave us the greatest love songs we possess. He knew how to play upon the harp of emotion, to bring forth plaintive melody and moving music new to English poetry. His work is touched by tenderness, and, like Blake's, his humanitarianism is prominent. Collins too was largely a Romantic, and, some say, a greater poet than Gray. Cowper, whose sad story touches the heart, sank "beneath a rougher sea." Gray, the perfect artist, left unfinished his most Romantic poem, *Ode on the Pleasure arising from Vicissitude*. He was rather afraid of the public taste, and his *Elegy*, almost a word-perfect poem, was altered and abridged in later editions.

The *Elegy* shows that he was still close to the spirit of the Augustan Age, for such phrases as "the muse's flame" and "*living lyre,*" *giving abstract pictures, are typical of* Pope's time. His omission of his most Romantic verse from later editions of the *Elegy* is further proof of his fear of being 'laughed at.' Here is the verse:

> There scattered oft, the earliest of the year,
> By hands unseen, are showers of violets found;
> The redbreast loves to build and warble there,
> And little footsteps lightly print the ground.

Besides these prominent Transition poets moulding public taste, there were other influences at work. The spirit of Romance runs through the pages of Macpherson's *Ossian,* which he declared, incorrectly, to be a translation of some Gaelic poems. It is poetic prose, of which this is an example:

> The stream of Clutha was removed from its place by the fall of the walls. The thistle shook there its lovely head; the moss whistled to the wind. The fox looked out from the windows; the rank grass of the wall waved round its head. Desolate is the dwelling of Moina, silence is in the house of her fathers.

Most wonderful of all was "the marvellous boy" of sixteen years, Thomas Chatterton, whose poems caught up the old romance. The Rowley poems, he declared, were found by [illegible] *of English Poetry*, a collection of ballads relating to "old, unhappy, far-off things," had a great influence on poets and public. Wordsworth said, "I do not think that there is an able writer in verse of the present day who would not be proud to acknowledge his obligations to the *Reliques*." Thomas Warton's *History of English Poetry* showed some of the things that had been neglected in our poetry. So it was that the Romantic Revival burst forth; but there were other forces conspiring to bring it about.

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Most wonderful of all was "the marvellous boy" of sixteen years, Thomas Chatterton, whose poems caught up the old romance. The Rowley poems, he declared, were found by him, but really they were written by him in archaic language. Horace Walpole, knowing how the public liked old romances, wrote one for them in his *Castle of Otranto*. Percy's *Reliques of English Poetry*, a collection of ballads relating to "old, unhappy, far-off things," had a great influence on poets and public. Wordsworth said, "I do not think that there is an able writer in verse of the present day who would not [illegible] ...e *Reliques.*" [illegible] ...ed some of [illegible] So it was that the Romantic Revival burst forth; but there were other forces conspiring to bring it about.

Watts-Dunton defined the Romantic Revival as "the

renascence of Wonder in poetry and prose" and the desire to regard the things of the world "with eyes of inquiry and wonder." (His novel *Aylwin* and its introduction deal with this theme.) We are all wondering about the why's and wherefore's of things. Our lives are adventures into the unknown, seeking knowledge and that beauty which is truth. Just as a child looks at a story-teller with open-eyed wonder, so do we regard each new step forward into the land of knowledge—though some do not take any interest in new knowledge at all. Some poets were mystified by the wonder of a small violet; others saw the mystery of the supernatural as a thing of wonder and a quest for ever. Imagination, that winged fairy that can in a flash transport us to "faery lands forlorn," comes into poetry once again. Wonder is reborn, and she lives to-day just as she did when Shakespeare told us there were more things in heaven and earth than were dreamt of in our philosophy. A world of Romance was found in nature and in human nature. Poetry was revivified.

Some of the reasons for this renascence we have seen in the Transition Period, but there were other contributory causes prior to that great year of English poetry, 1798, since when poetry has not looked back, but has marched on into the unknown, hoping it is not unknowable. The French Revolution of 1789 had influenced thought in this country. "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" were the watchwords. On some poets, like Shelley and Byron, the influence was marked, but Wordsworth outgrew his "first fine careless rapture" when he sang,

> Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
> But to be young was very heaven.

Then, again, this period sustained the revival in interest in the Middle Ages, the days of legend, chivalry, and glamorous deeds. Chatterton and his contemporaries had brought it to the fore. Here Scott found a happy field, and his poems set the poets writing tales of romance, as Keats did

his *Eve of St Mark* and *Eve of St Agnes*: Coleridge gave us *Christabel* in a similar mood. Criticism showed what a wealth of good things could be found in the Elizabethan period. Coleridge, Lamb, and Hazlitt wrote criticism in a sympathetic manner. Greek literature became a favourite study. Greek ideals of beauty, legend, thought, and philosophy influenced Shelley and Keats. Thus did the pendulum swing from rationalism to poems such as *The Ancient Mariner*, *Tintern Abbey*, and *Manfred*.

In the age which followed there were two main factors influencing life and poetry—democratic ideals and scientific thought. The Reform Acts and Factory Acts and interest in the condition of the mass of the people forced an advance in democratic ideals, and the progress of education, slow as it was, gave literature a wider audience. Scientific thought (as in Darwin's *Origin of Species*) influenced Tennyson and Browning. In fact, the scientific spirit took great hold on all literature, especially on novels and essays. The poetry of the Victorian Age pays much attention to humanity and problems of life and often introduces argument, but the Pre-Raphaelites—the Rossettis, Morris, Holman Hunt, Burne-Jones, and Swinburne—were chiefly concerned with Art and Beauty. They were worshippers of Beauty, but their work has not the greatness of Tennyson or Browning.

In Tennyson we have a wonderful melody:

> The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
> The murmuring of innumerable bees.

The various moods of nature appealed to him. His tender love poems lack the fervour of a Browning or a Shelley. His philosophy shows his belief in hope. Browning's poetry is marked by a sane, healthy optimism and by a belief in the greatness of love—"Love is best" He believes in the greatness of an ideal, and it is this seeking of a high ideal that "swells the man's amount." He loves problems. At times he is rather subtle, but he is never a dreamer. Browning has much to say to the thinking man. He is never in

doubt; he marches on through a good life, "never doubting clouds would break." Aim high is his message, and if you fail it is only the evidence of a triumph, for the small thing is easy to do. His is the spirit of courage. He would have made a grand explorer.

Many names occur now in the story of our poetry. In Arnold there is charm and sympathy. He has little emotion, but he was deeply concerned with the difficulties of his time. Yet he can be fanciful, as in his charming poem *The Forsaken Merman. Sohrab and Rustum* is one of his famous longer poems. Elizabeth Barrett Browning's work is marked by her deep sympathy, as in *The Cry of the Children*. In all her work there is reflected her humanitarian spirit. Deeply religious and sensitive is Christina Rossetti's poetry. There is a melancholy beauty and a tenderness in her work. It is easy to understand her as a self-sacrificing woman:

> Better you should forget and smile
> Than that you should remember and be sad.

We have no space to tell of other poets, for we must close with a word on modern poetry. Modern poets, as a rule, give us more of the short, spontaneous lyric type of poetry, full of music. Others are realists, putting life as they see it into the mesh of poetry. Our late Poet Laureate, Dr Bridges, is reflective and thoughtful, and a lover of experiment, as we see in his *Testament of Beauty*. This sensitive scholar disliked the tendency to overpaint. But it is good to feel that in the rush of this workaday world there are still people who can say, with W. H. Davies,

> What is this life if, full of care,
> We have no time to stand and stare?

No one dares prophesy what poets will be read a century hence, but it is a happy thought that many poets of to-day are given their praise before it is too late. But even yet the way of the poet is hard: the path to fame and wealth is not by way of poetry. There is hardly any subject or style

that is beyond the scope of modern poetry. Songs, lyrics, sonnets, odes, narrative poems, reflective poems; poems of the heavens, poems of the earth; poems strongly metrical and poems in *vers libre*; poems of the quiet life, poems of the world's noises; poems of war and poems of peace: you can find them all to-day. The War ended the song of many poets, but no war can end poetry.

And when you read the poems we have selected, perhaps you will tell us of some great modern poem we have omitted. That is very likely, and we almost hope you will say it. The story of poetry is still being written, and we can only sample some of the good things literature offers us. [illegible]

[illegible] long will our language be, as it has been, a home where thought and emotion can live. The day will dawn when with Robert Bridges we shall say:

> For beauty being the best of all we know
> Sums up the unsearchable and secret aims
> Of nature

LONGER ENGLISH POEMS

PROTHALAMION

Through discontent of my long fruitless stay
  In princes' court, and expectation vain
Of idle hopes, which still do fly away
  Like empty shadows, did afflict my brain)
      Walk'd forth to ease my pain
Along the shore of silver-streaming Thames,
Whose rutty bank, the which his river hems,
  Was painted all with variable flowers,
And all the meads adorn'd with dainty gems
      Fit to deck maidens' bowers,
      And crown their paramours
Against the bridal day, which is not long.
Sweet Thames! run softly, till I end my song.

There in a meadow by the river's side
  A flock of nymphs I chanced to espy,

And each one had a little wicker basket

      The tender stalks on high.

Of every sort which in that meadow grew
They gather'd some; the violet, pallid blue,
  The little daisy that at evening closes,
The virgin lily and the primrose true,
    With store of vermeil roses,
    To deck their bridegrooms' posies
Against the bridal day, which was not long:
Sweet Thames! run softly, till I end my song.

With that I saw two swans of goodly hue
  Come softly swimming down along the lee;
  Two fairer birds I yet did never see;
The snow which doth the top of Pindus strow
    Did never whiter show,
Nor Jove himself, when he a swan would be
  For love of Leda, whiter did appear;
Yet Leda was (they say) as white as he,
  Yet not so white as these, nor nothing near;
    So purely white they were,
That even the gentle stream, the which them bare,
Seem'd foul to them, and bade his billows spare
  To wet their silken feathers, lest they might
Soil their fair plumes with water not so fair,
    And mar their beauties bright,
    That shone as Heaven's light
Against their bridal day, which was not long:
Sweet Thames! run softly, till I end my song.

Eftsoons the nymphs, which now had flowers their fill,
  Ran all in haste to see that silver brood
  As they came floating on the crystal flood;
Whom when they saw, they stood amazèd still
    Their wondering eyes to fill;
Them seem'd they never saw a sight so fair
  Of fowls, so lovely, that they sure did deem
Them heavenly born, or to be that same pair
  Which through the sky draw Venus' silver team;
    For sure they did not seem

To be begot of any earthly seed,
But rather angels, or of angels' breed;
  Yet were they bred of summer's heat, they say,
In sweetest season, when each flower and weed
    The earth did fresh array;
    So fresh they seem'd as day,
Even as their bridal day, which was not long:
Sweet Thames! run softly, till I end my song.

Then forth they all out of their baskets drew
  Great store of flowers, the honour of the field,
  That to the sense did fragrant odours yield,
All which upon those goodly birds they threw
    And all the waves did strew,
That like old Peneus' waters they did seem,
  When down along by pleasant Tempe's shore,
Scatter'd with flowers, through Thessaly they stream,
    [illegible]
    [illegible]
Two of those nymphs meanwhile two garlands bound
Of freshest flowers which in that mead they found,
  The which presenting all in trim array,
Their snowy foreheads therewithal they crown'd;
    Whilst one did sing this lay
    Prepared against that day,
Against their bridal day, which was not long:
Sweet Thames! run softly, till I end my song.

"Ye gentle birds! the world's fair ornament,
  And Heaven's glory, whom this happy hour
  Doth lead unto your lovers' blissful bower,
Joy may you have, and gentle heart's content
    Of your love's couplement;
And let fair Venus, that is queen of love,
    [illegible]
[illegible]

Let endless peace your steadfast hearts accord,
And blessed plenty wait upon your board;
And let your bed with pleasures chaste abound,
That fruitful issue may to you afford,
Which may your foes confound,
And make your joys redound
Upon your bridal day, which is not long:
Sweet Thames! run softly, till I end my song."

So ended she; and all the rest around
To her redoubled that her undersong,
Which said their bridal day should not be long:
And gentle Echo from the neighbour ground
Their accents did resound.
So forth those joyous birds did pass along
Adown the lee that to them murmur'd low,
As he would speak but that he lack'd a tongue,
Yet did by signs his glad affection show,
Making his stream run slow.
And all the fowl which in his flood did dwell
'Gan flock about these twain, that did excel
The rest, so far as Cynthia doth shend
The lesser stars. So they, enrangèd well,
Did on those two attend,
And their best service lend
Against their wedding day, which was not long:
Sweet Thames! run softly, till I end my song.

At length they all to merry London came,
To merry London, my most kindly nurse,
That to me gave this life's first native source,
Though from another place I take my name,
An house of ancient fame:
There when they came whereas those bricky towers
The which on Thames' broad aged back do ride,
Where now the studious lawyers have their bowers,
There whilome wont the Templar-knights to bide,
Till they decay'd through pride;

Next whereunto there stands a stately place,
Where oft I gainèd gifts and goodly grace
  Of that great lord, which therein wont to dwell,
Whose want too well now feels my friendless case;
    But ah! here fits not well
    Old woes, but joys, to tell
Against the bridal day, which is not long:
Sweet Thames! run softly, till I end my song.

Yet therein now doth lodge a noble peer,
  Great England's glory and the world's wide wonder,
  Whose dreadful name late through all Spain did thunder,
And Hercules' two pillars standing near
    Did make to quake and fear:
Fair branch of honour, flower of chivalry!
  That fillest England with thy triumphs' fame,
Joy have thou of thy noble victory,
  And endless happiness of thine own name
    That promiseth the same;
That through thy prowess and victorious arms
Thy country may be freed from foreign harms,
  And great Eliza's glorious name may ring
Through all the world, fill'd with thy wide alarms,
    Which some brave Muse may sing
    To ages following,
Upon the bridal day, which is not long:
Sweet Thames! run softly, till I end my song.

From those high towers this noble lord issuing,
  [illegible]
    [illegible]
Descended to the river's open viewing
    With a great train ensuing.
Above the rest were goodly to be seen
  Two gentle knights of lovely face and feature,

Beseeming well the bower of any queen,
With gifts of wit and ornaments of nature,
Fit for so goodly stature,
That like the twins of Jove they seem'd in sight,
Which deck the baldric of the Heavens bright;
They two, forth pacing to the river's side,
Received those two fair brides, their love's delight;
Which, at th' appointed tide,
Each one did make his bride
Against their bridal day, which is not long:
Sweet Thames! run softly, till I end my song.

EDMUND SPENSER

LYCIDAS

ELEGY ON A FRIEND DROWNED IN THE IRISH CHANNEL

YET once more, O ye laurels, and once more
Ye myrtles brown, with ivy never sere,
I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude,
And with forced fingers rude
Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year.
Bitter constraint, and sad occasion dear,
Compels me to disturb your season due:
For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime,
Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer:
Who would not sing for Lycidas? he knew
Himself to sing, and build the lofty rhyme.
He must not float upon his watery bier
Unwept, and welter to the parching wind,
Without the meed of some melodious tear.

Begin then, Sisters of the sacred well
That from beneath the seat of Jove doth spring,
Begin, and somewhat loudly sweep the string.
Hence with denial vain and coy excuse:

So may some gentle Muse
With lucky words favour my destined urn,
And as he passes turn,
And bid fair peace be to my sable shroud.

For we were nursed upon the self-same hill,
Fed the same flock by fountain, shade, and rill.
Together both, ere the high lawns appear'd
Under the opening eye-lids of the morn,
We drove a-field, and both together heard
What time the gray-fly winds her sultry horn,
Battening our flocks with the fresh dews of night,
Oft till the star, that rose at evening bright,
Toward heaven's descent had sloped his westering wheel.
Meanwhile the rural ditties were not mute,
Temper'd to the oaten flute;
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

But O the heavy change, now thou art gone,
Now thou art gone, and never must return!
Thee, Shepherd, thee the woods, and desert caves,
With wild thyme and the gadding vine o'ergrown,
And all their echoes, mourn:
The willows and the hazel copses green
Shall now no more be seen
Fanning their joyous leaves to thy soft lays.
As killing as the canker to the rose,
Or taint-worm to the weanling herds that graze,
Or frost to flowers, that their gay wardrobe wear
When first the white-thorn blows;
Such, Lycidas, thy loss to shepherd's ear.

Where were ye, Nymphs, when the remorseless deep
Closed o'er the head of your loved Lycidas?
For neither were ye playing on the steep
Where your old bards, the famous Druids, lie,

Nor on the shaggy top of Mona high,
Nor yet where Deva spreads her wizard stream:
Ay me! I fondly dream—
Had ye been there—for what could that have done?
What could the Muse herself that Orpheus bore,
The Muse herself, for her enchanting son,
Whom universal nature did lament,
When by the rout that made the hideous roar
His gory visage down the stream was sent,
Down the swift Hebrus to the Lesbian shore?

Alas! what boots it with uncessant care
To tend the homely, slighted, shepherd's trade
And strictly meditate the thankless Muse?
Were it not better done, as others use,
To sport with Amaryllis in the shade,
Or with the tangles of Neæra's hair?
Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise
(That last infirmity of noble mind)
To scorn delights, and live laborious days;
But the fair guerdon when we hope to find,
And think to burst out into sudden blaze,
Comes the blind Fury with the abhorrèd shears
And slits the thin-spun life. "But not the praise,"
Phœbus replied, and touch'd my trembling ears;
"Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,
Nor in the glistering foil
Set off to the world, nor in broad rumour lies:
But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes
And perfect witness of all-judging Jove;
As he pronounces lastly on each deed,
Of so much fame in heaven expect thy meed."

O fountain Arethuse, and thou honour'd flood,
Smooth-sliding Mincius, crown'd with vocal reeds,
That strain I heard was of a higher mood:
But now my oat proceeds,

And listens to the herald of the sea
That came in Neptune's plea;
He ask'd the waves, and ask'd the felon winds,
What hard mishap hath doom'd this gentle swain?
And question'd every gust of rugged wings
That blows from off each beakèd promontory:
They knew not of his story;
[illegible]
Sleek Panope with all her sisters play'd.
It was that fatal and perfidious bark
Built in the eclipse, and rigg'd with curses dark,
That sunk so low that sacred head of thine.

Next Camus, reverend sire, went footing slow,
[illegible]
Two massy keys he bore of metals twain
(The golden opes, the iron shuts amain);
He shook his mitred locks, and stern bespake:
" How well could I have spared for thee, young swain,
Enow of such as for their bellies' sake
Creep and intrude and climb into the fold!
Of other care they little reckoning make
Than how to scramble at the shearers' feast,
And shove away the worthy bidden guest.
Blind mouths! that scarce themselves know how to hold
[illegible]
And when they list, their lean and flashy songs
Grate on their scrannel pipes of wretched straw;

The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed,
But swoln with wind and the rank mist they draw
Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread:
Besides what the grim wolf with privy paw
Daily devours apace, and nothing said:
—But that two-handed engine at the door
Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more."

Return, Alpheus, the dread voice is past
That shrunk thy streams; return, Sicilian Muse,
And call the vales, and bid them hither cast
Their bells and flowerets of a thousand hues.
Ye valleys low, where the mild whispers use
Of shades, and wanton winds, and gushing brooks,
On whose fresh lap the swart star sparely looks,
Throw hither all your quaint enamell'd eyes
That on the green turf suck the honey'd showers
And purple all the ground with vernal flowers.
Bring the rathe primrose that forsaken dies,
The tufted crow-toe, and pale jessamine,
The white pink, and the pansy freak'd with jet,
The glowing violet,
The musk-rose, and the well-attired woodbine,
With cowslips wan that hang the pensive head,
And every flower that sad embroidery wears:
Bid amaranthus all his beauty shed,
And daffadillies fill their cups with tears
To strew the laureat hearse where Lycid lies.
For, so to interpose a little ease,
Let our frail thoughts dally with false surmise;
Ay me! whilst thee the shores and sounding seas
Wash far away,—where'er thy bones are hurl'd,
Whether beyond the stormy Hebrides,
Where thou perhaps, under the whelming tide,
Visitest the bottom of the monstrous world;
Or whether thou, to our moist vows denied,
Sleep'st by the fable of Bellerus old,

Where the great Vision of the guarded mount
Looks toward Namancos and Bayona's hold,
—Look homeward, Angel, now, and melt with ruth:
—And, O ye dolphins, waft the hapless youth!

Weep no more, woeful shepherds, weep no more,
For Lycidas, your sorrow, is not dead,
Sunk though he be beneath the watery floor;
So sinks the day-star in the ocean-bed,
And yet anon repairs his drooping head
And tricks his beams, and with new-spangled ore
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
Where, other groves and other streams along,
With nectar pure his oozy locks he laves,
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
In solemn troops, and sweet societies,
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
Henceforth thou art the Genius of the shore
In thy large recompense, and shalt be good
To all that wander in that perilous flood.

Thus sang the uncouth swain to the oaks and rills,
While the still morn went out with sandals grey;
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
And now was dropt into the western bay:
At last he rose, and twitch'd his mantle blue:
To-morrow to fresh woods, and pastures new.

John Milton

L'ALLEGRO

Hence, loathèd Melancholy,
Of Cerberus and blackest Midnight born,
In Stygian cave forlorn
'Mongst horrid shapes, and shrieks, and sights unholy!
Find out some uncouth cell,
Where brooding Darkness spreads his jealous wings
And the night-raven sings;
There, under ebon shades and low-brow'd rocks,
As ragged as thy locks,
In dark Cimmerian desert ever dwell.

But come, thou Goddess fair and free,
In Heaven yclep'd Euphrosyne,
And by men, heart-easing Mirth,
Whom lovely Venus at a birth
With two sister Graces more
To ivy-crownèd Bacchus bore:
Or whether (as some sager sing)
The frolic wind that breathes the spring,
Zephyr, with Aurora playing,
As he met her once a-Maying—
There on beds of violets blue
And fresh-blown roses wash'd in dew
Fill'd her with thee, a daughter fair,
So buxom, blithe, and debonair.
Haste thee, Nymph, and bring with thee
Jest, and youthful Jollity,
Quips, and cranks, and wanton wiles,
Nods, and becks, and wreathèd smiles,
Such as hang on Hebe's cheek,
And love to live in dimple sleek;
Sport that wrinkled Care derides,
And Laughter holding both his sides.

Come, and trip it as you go
On the light fantastic toe;
And in thy right hand lead with thee
The mountain nymph, sweet Liberty;
And if I give thee honour due,
Mirth, admit me of thy crew,
To live with her, and live with thee
In unreprovèd pleasures free;
To hear the lark begin his flight
And singing startle the dull night
From his watch-tower in the skies,
Till the dappled dawn doth rise;
Then to come, in spite of sorrow,
And at my window bid good-morrow
Through the sweetbriar, or the vine,
Or the twisted eglantine:
While the cock with lively din
Scatters the rear of darkness thin,
And to the stack, or the barn-door,
Stoutly struts his dames before:
Oft listening how the hounds and horn
Cheerly rouse the slumbering morn,
From the side of some hoar hill,
Through the high wood echoing shrill.
Sometime walking, not unseen,
By hedge-row elms, on hillocks green,
Right against the eastern gate
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
While the ploughman, near at hand,
Whistles o'er the furrow'd land,
And the milkmaid singeth blithe,
And the mower whets his scythe,
And every shepherd tells his tale
Under the hawthorn in the dale.
  Straight mine eye hath caught new pleasures

Whilst the landscape round it measures;
Russet lawns, and fallows grey,
Where the nibbling flocks do stray;
Mountains, on whose barren breast
The labouring clouds do often rest;
Meadows trim with daisies pied,
Shallow brooks, and rivers wide;
Towers and battlements it sees
Bosom'd high in tufted trees,
Where perhaps some Beauty lies,
The Cynosure of neighbouring eyes.
  Hard by, a cottage chimney smokes
From betwixt two aged oaks,
Where Corydon and Thyrsis, met,
Are at their savoury dinner set
Of herbs, and other country messes
Which the neat-handed Phillis dresses;
And then in haste her bower she leaves
With Thestylis to bind the sheaves;
Or, if the earlier season lead,
To the tann'd haycock in the mead.
  Sometimes with secure delight
The upland hamlets will invite,
When the merry bells ring round,
And the jocund rebecks sound
To many a youth and many a maid,
Dancing in the chequer'd shade;
And young and old come forth to play
On a sunshine holy-day,
Till the live-long daylight fail:
Then to the spicy nut-brown ale,
With stories told of many a feat,
How Faery Mab the junkets eat;
She was pinch'd, and pull'd, she said;
And he, by Friar's lantern led;
Tells how the drudging Goblin sweat
To earn his cream-bowl duly set,

When in one night, ere glimpse of morn,
[illegible]
[illegible]
Then lies him down the lubber fiend,
And, stretch'd out all the chimney's length,
Basks at the fire his hairy strength;
And crop-full out of doors he flings,
Ere the first cock his matin rings.
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
And the busy hum of men,
Where throngs of knights and barons bold,
In weeds of peace high triumphs hold,
With store of ladies, whose bright eyes
Rain influence, and judge the prize
Of wit or arms, while both contend
To win her grace, whom all commend.
There let Hymen oft appear
In saffron robe, with taper clear,
And pomp, and feast, and revelry,
With mask, and antique pageantry;
Such sights as youthful poets dream
On summer eves by haunted stream
Then to the well-trod stage anon,
If Jonson's learned sock be on,
Or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,
Warble his *native* wood-notes wild.
  And ever against eating cares
Lap me in soft Lydian airs
Married to immortal verse,
Such as the meeting soul may pierce
In notes, with many a winding bout
Of linkèd sweetness long drawn out,
With wanton heed and giddy cunning,
The melting voice through mazes running,
Untwisting all the chains that tie

The hidden soul of harmony;
That Orpheus' self may heave his head
From golden slumber, on a bed
Of heap'd Elysian flowers, and hear
Such strains as would have won the ear
Of Pluto, to have quite set free
His half-regain'd Eurydice.

These delights if thou canst give,
Mirth, with thee I mean to live.

JOHN MILTON

IL PENSEROSO

HENCE, vain deluding Joys,
The brood of Folly without father bred!
How little you bestead
Or fill the fixèd mind with all your toys!
Dwell in some idle brain,
And fancies fond with gaudy shapes possess
As thick and numberless
As the gay motes that people the sunbeams,
Or likest hovering dreams,
The fickle pensioners of Morpheus' train.

But hail, thou goddess sage and holy,
Hail, divinest Melancholy!
Whose saintly visage is too bright
To hit the sense of human sight,
And therefore to our weaker view
O'erlaid with black, staid Wisdom's hue;
Black, but such as in esteem
Prince Memnon's sister might beseem,
Or that starr'd Ethiop queen that strove
To set her beauty's praise above
The sea-nymphs, and their powers offended:
Yet thou art higher far descended:
Thee bright-hair'd Vesta, long of yore,

To solitary Saturn bore;
His daughter she; in Saturn's reign
Such mixture was not held a stain:
Oft in glimmering bowers and glades
He met her, and in secret shades
Of woody Ida's inmost grove,
Whilst yet there was no fear of Jove.
Come, pensive nun, devout and pure,
Sober, steadfast, and demure,
All in a robe of darkest grain
Flowing with majestic train,
And sable stole of cypres lawn
Over thy decent shoulders drawn.
Come, but keep thy wonted state,
[illegible]
Forget thyself to marble, till
With a sad leaden downward cast
Thou fix them on the earth as fast:
And join with thee calm Peace, and Quiet,
Spare Fast, that oft with gods doth diet,
And hears the Muses in a ring
Ay round about Jove's altar sing:
And add to these retirèd Leisure
That in trim gardens takes his pleasure:—
But first, and chiefest, with thee bring
Him that yon soars on golden wing
Guiding the fiery-wheelèd throne,
The cherub Contemplatiòn;
And the mute Silence hist along,
'Less Philomel will deign a song
In her sweetest, saddest plight,
[illegible]

—Sweet bird, that shunn'st the noise of folly,
Most musical, most melancholy!
Thee, chauntress, oft, the woods among
I woo, to hear thy even-song;
And missing thee, I walk unseen
On the dry smooth-shaven green,
To behold the wandering Moon
Riding near her highest noon,
Like one that had been led astray
Through the heaven's wide pathless way,
And oft, as if her head she bow'd,
Stooping through a fleecy cloud.
   Oft, on a plat of rising ground
I hear the far-off curfeu sound
Over some wide-water'd shore,
Swinging slow with sullen roar:
Or, if the air will not permit,
Some still removèd place will fit,
Where glowing embers through the room
Teach light to counterfeit a gloom;
Far from all resort of mirth,
Save the cricket on the hearth,
Or the bellman's drowsy charm
To bless the doors from nightly harm.
   Or let my lamp at midnight hour
Be seen in some high lonely tower,
Where I may oft out-watch the Bear
With thrice-great Hermes, or unsphere
The spirit of Plato, to unfold
What worlds or what vast regions hold
The immortal mind, that hath forsook
Her mansion in this fleshly nook:
And of those demons that are found
In fire, air, flood, or under ground,
Whose power hath a true consent
With planet, or with element.
Sometime let gorgeous Tragedy

In scepter'd pall come sweeping by,
Presenting Thebes, or Pelops' line,
Or the tale of Troy divine;
Or what (though rare) of later age
Ennobled hath the buskin'd stage.
But, O sad Virgin, that thy power
Might raise Musæus from his bower,
Or bid the soul of Orpheus sing
Such notes as, warbled to the string,
Drew iron tears down Pluto's cheek
And made Hell grant what Love did seek!
Or call up him that left half-told
The story of Cambuscan bold,
Of Camball, and of Algarsife,
And who had Canacè to wife,
That own'd the virtuous ring and glass;
And of the wondrous horse of brass
On which the Tartar king did ride:
And if aught else great bards beside
In sage and solemn tunes have sung,
Of turneys, and of trophies hung,
Of forests, and enchantments drear,
Where more is meant than meets the ear.
Thus, Night, oft see me in thy pale career,
Till civil-suited Morn appear,
Not trick'd and frounced as she was wont
With the Attic Boy to hunt,
But kercheft in a comely cloud
While rocking winds are piping loud,
Or usher'd with a shower still,
When the gust hath blown his fill,
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
And shadows brown, that Sylvan loves,

Of pine, or monumental oak,
Where the rude axe, with heavèd stroke,
Was never heard the nymphs to daunt
Or fright them from their hallow'd haunt.
There in close covert by some brook
Where no profaner eye may look,
Hide me from day's garish eye,
While the bee with honey'd thigh,
That at her flowery work doth sing,
And the waters murmuring,
With such consort as they keep
Entice the dewy-feather'd Sleep;
And let some strange mysterious dream
Wave at his wings in airy stream
Of lively portraiture display'd,
Softly on my eyelids laid:
And, as I wake, sweet music breathe
Above, about, or underneath,
Sent by some Spirit to mortals good,
Or the unseen Genius of the wood.
  But let my due feet never fail
To walk the studious cloister's pale,
And love the high-embowèd roof,
With antique pillars massy-proof,
And storied windows richly dight
Casting a dim religious light:
There let the pealing organ blow
To the full-voiced quire below
In service high and anthems clear,
As may with sweetness, through mine ear,
Dissolve me into ecstasies,
And bring all Heaven before mine eyes.
  And may at last my weary age
Find out the peaceful hermitage,
The hairy gown and mossy cell
Where I may sit and rightly spell
Of every star that heaven doth show,

And every herb that sips the dew;
Till old experience do attain
To something like prophetic strain.

These pleasures, Melancholy, give,
And I with thee will choose to live.

JOHN MILTON

MAC FLECKNOE

ALL human things are subject to decay,
And when Fate summons, Monarchs must
obey.
This Flecknoe found, who, like Augustus, young
Was call'd to empire, and had govern'd long;
In prose and verse was own'd, without dispute,
[illegible]

[illegible]

To settle the succession of the state:
[illegible]

[illegible]

Should only rule who most resembles me.
Shadwell alone my perfect image bears,
Mature in dulness from his tender years:
Shadwell alone of all my sons is he
Who stands confirm'd in full stupidity.
The rest to some faint meaning make pretence,
But Shadwell never deviates into sense.
Some beams of wit on other souls may fall,
[illegible]

[illegible]

Thoughtless as monarch oaks that shade the plain
And, spread in solemn state, supinely reign.
Heywood and Shirley were but types of thee,
Thou last great prophet of tautology.
Even I, a dunce of more renown than they,
Was sent before but to prepare thy way;
And coarsely clad in Norwich drugget came
To teach the nations in thy greater name.
My warbling lute, the lute I whilom strung
When to King John of Portugal I sung,
Was but the prelude to that glorious day,
When thou on silver Thames didst cut thy way,
With well-tim'd oars before the royal barge,
Swell'd with the pride of thy celestial charge,
And big with hymn, commander of an host;
The like was ne'er in Epsom blankets toss'd.
Methinks I see the new Arion sail,
The lute still trembling underneath thy nail.
At thy well-sharpen'd thumb from shore to shore
The trebles squeak for fear, the basses roar;
About thy boat the little fishes throng,
As at the morning toast that floats along.
Sometimes, as prince of thy harmonious band,
Thou wield'st thy papers in thy threshing hand.
St André's feet ne'er kept more equal time,
Not e'en the feet of thy own Psyche's rhyme;
Though they in number as in sense excel:
So just, so like tautology, they fell,
That, pale with envy, Singleton forswore
The lute and sword which he in triumph bore,
And vow'd, he ne'er would act Villerius more."
Here stopp'd the good old sire and wept for joy,
In silent raptures of the hopeful boy.
All arguments, but most his plays, persuade
That for anointed dulness he was made.
Close to the walls which fair Augusta bind,
(The fair Augusta much to fears inclin'd,)

An ancient fabric rais'd to inform the sight
There stood of yore, and Barbican it hight;
A watchtower once, but now, so fate ordains,
Of all the pile an empty name remains.
Near it a nursery erects its head,
Where queens are form'd and future heroes bred,
Where unfledg'd actors learn to laugh and cry,
And little Maximins the gods defy.
Great Fletcher never treads in buskins here,
N[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
Pure clinches the suburbian muse affords
And Panton waging harmless war with words.
Here Flecknoe, as a place to fame well known,
Ambitiously design'd his Shadwell's throne.
For ancient Dekker prophesied long since
That in this pile should reign a mighty prince,
Born for a scourge of wit and flail of sense,
To whom true dulness should some 'Psyches' owe,
But worlds of 'Misers' from his pen should flow;
'Humorists' and 'Hypocrites' it should produce,
Whole Raymond families and tribes of Bruce.
Now empress Fame had publish'd the renown
Of Shadwell's coronation through the town.
Rous'd by report of fame, the nations meet
From near Bunhill and distant Watling street.
No Persian carpets spread the imperial way,
[illegible]

Bilk'd stationers for yeomen stood prepar'd,
And Herringman was captain of the guard.
The hoary prince in majesty appear'd
High on a throne of his own labours rear'd.
At his right hand our young Ascanius sat,
Rome's other hope, and pillar of the state.

His brows thick fogs, instead of glories, grace,
And lambent dulness play'd around his face.
As Hannibal did to the altars come,
Swore by his sire, a mortal foe to Rome;
So Shadwell swore, nor should his vow be vain,
That he till death true dulness would maintain,
And, in his father's right, and realm's defence,
Ne'er to have peace with wit, nor truce with sense.
The king himself the sacred unction made,
As king by office and as priest by trade.
In his sinister hand, instead of ball,
He plac'd a mighty mug of potent ale;
Love's Kingdom to his right he did convey,
At once his sceptre and his rule of sway;
Whose righteous lore the prince had practis'd young
And from whose loins recorded 'Psyche' sprung.
His temples, last, with poppies were o'erspread,
That nodding seemed to consecrate his head.
Just at that point of time, if fame not lie,
On his left hand twelve reverend owls did fly.
So Romulus, 'tis sung, by Tyber's brook,
Presage of sway from twice six vultures took.
The admiring throng loud acclamations make,
And omens of his future empire take.
The sire then shook the honours of his head,
And from his brows damps of oblivion shed
Full on the filial dulness: long he stood,
Repelling from his breast the raging god;
At length burst out in this prophetic mood.
"Heavens bless my son! from Ireland let him reign
To far Barbadoes on the western main;
Of his dominion may no end be known,
And greater than his father's be his throne;
Beyond *Love's Kingdom* let him stretch his pen!"
He paus'd, and all the people cried "Amen."
Then thus continued he: "My son, advance
Still in new impudence, new ignorance.

Success let others teach, learn thou from me
Pangs without birth, and fruitless industry.
Let *Virtuosos* in five years be writ,
Yet not one thought accuse thy toil of wit.
Let gentle George in triumph tread the stage,
Make *Dorimant* betray, and *Loveit* rage;
Let *Cully*, *Cockwood*, *Fopling*, charm the pit,
And in their folly show the writer's wit.
Yet still thy fools shall stand in thy defence
And justify their author's want of sense.
Let 'em be all by thy own model made
Of dullness, and desire no foreign aid;
That they to future ages may be known,
Not copies drawn, but issue of thy own.
Nay, let thy men of wit too be the same,
All full of thee and differing but in name.
But let no alien Sedley interpose
To lard with wit thy hungry *Epsom* prose.
And when false flowers of rhetoric thou wouldst
cull,
Trust nature, do not labour to be dull,
But write thy best and top, and in each line
Sir *Formal's* oratory will be thine.
Sir *Formal*, though unsought, attends thy quill,
And does thy northern dedications fill.
Nor let false friends seduce thy mind to fame
By arrogating Jonson's hostile name.
Let father Flecknoe fire thy mind with praise
And uncle Ogleby thy envy raise.
Thou art my blood, where Jonson has no part:
What share have we in nature, or in art?
Where did his wit on learning fix a brand
And rail at arts he did not understand?
Where made he love in Prince *Nicander's* ve
Or swept the dust in *Psyche's* humble strain?
When did his Muse from Fletcher scenes p
As thou whole Etherege dost transfuse to

Success let others teach, learn thou from me
Pangs without birth, and fruitless industry.
Let *Virtuosos* in five years be writ,
Yet not one thought accuse thy toil of wit.
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
Yet still thy fools shall stand in thy defence
And justify their author's want of sense.
Let 'em be all by thy own model made
Of dulness, and desire no foreign aid;
That they to future ages may be known,
Not copies drawn, but issue of thy own.
Nay, let thy men of wit too be the same,
All full of thee and differing but in name.
But let no alien Sedley interpose
To lard with wit thy hungry Epsom prose.
And when false flowers of rhetoric thou wouldst
cull,
Trust nature, do not labour to be dull;
But write thy best and top; and in each line
Sir Formal's oratory will be thine.
Sir Formal, though unsought, attends thy quill,
And does thy northern dedications fill.
Nor let false friends seduce thy mind to fame
By arrogating Jonson's hostile name;
Let father Flecknoe fire thy mind with praise
And uncle Ogleby thy envy raise.
Thou art my blood, where Jonson has no part.
What share have we in nature, or in art?
Where did his wit on learning fix a brand
And rail at arts he did not understand?
Where made he love in Prince Nicander's vein
Or swept the dust in Psyche's humble strain?
When did his Muse from Fletcher scenes purloin,
As thou whole Etheridge dost transfuse to thine?

But so transfus'd, as oil on waters flow,
His always floats above, thine sinks below.
This is thy province, this thy wondrous way,
New humours to invent for each new play:
This is that boasted bias of thy mind,
By which one way to dulness 'tis inclin'd,
Which makes thy writings lean on one side still,
And, in all changes, that way bends thy will.
Nor let thy mountain belly make pretence
Of likeness; thine's a tympany of sense.
A tun of man in thy large bulk is writ,
But sure thou'rt but a kilderkin of wit.
Like mine, thy gentle numbers feebly creep;
Thy tragic Muse gives smiles, thy comic sleep.
With whate'er gall thou sett'st thyself to write,
Thy inoffensive satires never bite;
In thy felonious heart though venom lies,
It does but touch thy Irish pen, and dies.
Thy genius calls thee not to purchase fame
In keen Iambics, but mild Anagram.
Leave writing plays, and choose for thy commanc
Some peaceful province in Acrostic land.
There thou may'st wings display and altars raise,
And torture one poor word ten thousand ways;
Or, if thou would'st thy different talents suit,
Set thy own songs, and sing them to thy lute."
He said, but his last words were scarcely heard
For Bruce and Longville had a trap prepar'd,
And down they sent the yet declaiming bard.
Sinking he left his drugget robe behind,
Born upwards by a subterranean wind.
The mantle fell to the young prophet's part
With double portion of his father's art.

JOHN DRYDE

THE RAPE OF THE LOCK

CANTO I

[illegible]

[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible] ld compel
A well-bred lord to assault a gentle belle?
O say what stranger cause, yet unexplored,
Could make a gentle belle reject a lord?
In tasks so bold, can little men engage,
And in soft bosoms dwells such mighty rage?
  Sol through white curtains shot a timorous ray,
And oped those eyes that must eclipse the day:
Now lapdogs give themselves the rousing shake,
And sleepless lovers, just at twelve, awake:
Thrice rung the bell, the slipper knocked the ground,
And the pressed watch returned a silver sound.
Belinda still her downy pillow pressed,
Her guardian Sylph prolonged the balmy rest:
'Twas he had summoned to her silent bed
The morning dream that hovered o'er her head;
A youth more glittering than a birth-night beau,
(That even in slumber caused her cheek to glow,
Seemed to her ear his winning lips to lay,
And thus in whispers said, or seemed to say:
  "Fairest of mortals, thou distinguished care
Of thousand bright inhabitants of air!
If e'er one vision touched thy infant thought,
Of all the nurse and all the priest have taught;
Of airy elves by moonlight shadows seen,
The silver token, and the circled green,
Or virgins visited by angel-powers,

With golden crowns and wreaths of
Hear and believe! thy own importa
Nor bound thy narrow views to thi
Some secret truths, from learned pri
To maids alone and children are reve
What though no credit doubting wi
The fair and innocent shall still beli
Know, then, unnumbered spirits rou
The light militia of the lower sky:
These, though unseen, are ever on th
Hang o'er the box, and hover round
Think what an equipage thou hast in
And view with scorn two pages and
own, our beings were

What guards the purity of melting maids,
In courtly balls, and midnight masquerades,
Safe from the treacherous friend, the daring spark,
The glance by day, the whisper in the dark,
When kind occasion prompts their warm desires,
When music softens, and when dancing fires?
'Tis but their Sylph, the wise celestials know,
Though Honour is the word with men below.
"Some nymphs there are, too conscious of their face,
For life predestined to the gnome's embrace.
These swell their prospects and exalt their pride,
When offers are disdained and love denied:
Then gay ideas crowd the vacant brain,
While peers and dukes, and all their sweeping train,
And garters, stars, and coronets appear,
And in soft sounds 'Your Grace' salutes their ear.
'Tis these that early taint the female soul,
Instruct the eyes of young coquettes to roll,
Teach infant-cheeks a bidden blush to know,
And little hearts to flutter at a beau.
"Oft, when the world imagine women stray,
[illegible] way,
[illegible]
[illegible]
What tender maid but must a victim fall
To one man's treat, but for another's ball?
When Florio speaks, what virgin could withstand,
[illegible]
[illegible]
strive,
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
"[illegible]
A watchful sprite, and Ariel is my name.

With golden crowns and wreaths of heavenly flowers;
Hear and believe! thy own importance know,
Nor bound thy narrow views to things below.
Some secret truths, from learned pride concealed,
To maids alone and children are revealed:
What though no credit doubting wits may give?
The fair and innocent shall still believe.
Know, then, unnumbered spirits round thee fly,
The light militia of the lower sky:
These, though unseen, are ever on the wing,
Hang o'er the box, and hover round the ring.
Think what an equipage thou hast in air,
And view with scorn two pages and a chair.
As now your own, our beings were of old,
And once inclosed in woman's beauteous mould;
Thence, by a soft transition, we repair
From earthly vehicles to these of air.
Think not, when woman's transient breath is fled,
That all her vanities at once are dead;
Succeeding vanities she still regards,
And though she plays no more, o'erlooks the cards.
Her joy in gilded chariots, when alive,
And love of ombre, after death survive.
For when the fair in all their pride expire,
To their first elements their souls retire:
The sprites of fiery termagants in flame
Mount up, and take a salamander's name.
Soft yielding minds to water glide away,
And sip, with nymphs, their elemental tea.
The graver prude sinks downward to a gnome,
In search of mischief still on earth to roam.
The light coquettes in sylphs aloft repair,
And sport and flutter in the fields of air.
"Know further yet: whoever fair and chaste
Rejects mankind, is by some sylph embraced:
For spirits, freed from mortal laws, with ease
Assume what sexes and what shapes they please.

What guards the purity of melting maids,
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
When music softens, and when dancing fires?
'Tis but their Sylph, the wise celestials know,
Though Honour is the word with men below.
  "Some nymphs there are, too conscious of their face,
For life predestined to the gnome's embrace.
These swell their prospects and exalt their pride,
When offers are disdained and love denied:
Then gay ideas crowd the vacant brain,
While peers and dukes, and all their sweeping train,
And garters, stars, and coronets appear,
And in soft sounds 'Your Grace' salutes their ear.
'Tis these that early taint the female soul,
Instruct the eyes of young coquettes to roll,
Teach infant-cheeks a bidden blush to know,
And little hearts to flutter at a beau.
  "Oft, when the world imagine women stray,
[illegible] way,
[illegible]
[illegible]
What tender maid but must a victim fall
To one man's treat, but for another's ball?
When Florio speaks, what virgin could withstand,
If gentle Damon did not squeeze her hand?
With varying vanities, from every part,
They shift the moving toy-shop of their heart;
Where wigs with wigs, with sword-knots sword-knots strive,
Beaux banish beaux, and coaches coaches drive.
This erring mortals levity may call;
Oh, blind to truth! the Sylphs contrive it all.
  "Of these am I, who thy protection claim,
A watchful sprite, and Ariel is my name.

Late, as I ranged the crystal wilds of air,
In the clear mirror of thy ruling star
I saw, alas! some dread event impend,
Ere to the main this morning sun descend,
But Heaven reveals not what, or how, or where:
Warned by the Sylph, oh, pious maid, beware!
This to disclose is all thy guardian can:
Beware of all, but most beware of man!"
He said: when Shock, who thought she slept too long,
Leaped up, and waked his mistress with his tongue.
'Twas then, Belinda, if report say true,
Thy eyes first opened on a *billet doux*;
Wounds, charms, and ardours, were no sooner read,
But all the vision vanished from thy head.
And now, unveiled, the toilet stands displayed,
Each silver vase in mystic order laid.
First, robed in white, the nymph intent adores,
With head uncovered, the cosmetic powers.
A heavenly image in the glass appears,
To that she bends, to that her eye she rears;
The inferior priestess, at her altar's side,
Trembling begins the sacred rites of pride.
Unnumbered treasures ope at once, and here
The various offerings of the world appear;
From each she nicely culls with curious toil,
And decks the goddess with the glittering spoil.
This casket India's glowing gems unlocks,
And all Arabia breathes from yonder box.
The tortoise here and elephant unite,
Transformed to combs, the speckled and the white.
Here files of pins extend their shining rows,
Puffs, powders, patches, Bibles, *billet doux*.
Now awful beauty puts on all its arms;
The fair each moment rises in her charms,
Repairs her smiles, awakens every grace,
And calls forth all the wonders of her face:

Sees by degrees a purer blush arise,
And keener lightnings quicken in her eyes.
The busy Sylphs surround their darling care,
These set the head, and those divide the hair,
Some fold the sleeve, while others plait the gown;
And Betty's praised for labours not her own.

CANTO II

Not with more glories, in the ethereal plain,
The sun first rises o'er the purpled main,
Than, issuing forth, the rival of his beams
Launched on the bosom of the silver Thames.
Fair nymphs and well-dressed youths around her shone,
But every eye was fixed on her alone.
On her white breast a sparkling cross she wore,
Which Jews might kiss, and infidels adore.
Her lively looks a sprightly mind disclose,
Quick as her eyes, and as unfixed as those:
Favours to none, to all she smiles extends;
Oft she rejects, but never once offends.
Bright as the sun, her eyes the gazers strike,
And, like the sun, they shine on all alike.
[illegible]

Look on her face, and you'll forget 'em all.
This nymph, to the destruction of mankind,
Nourished two locks, which graceful hung behind
In equal curls, and well conspired to deck,
With shining ringlets, the smooth ivory neck.
Love in these labyrinths his slaves detains,
And mighty hearts are held in slender chains.
With hairy springes we the birds betray,
Slight lines of hair surprise the finny prey,
Fair tresses man's imperial race insnare,
And beauty draws us with a single hair.

The adventurous Baron the bright locks admired;
He saw, he wished, and to the prize aspired.
Resolved to win, he meditates the way,
By force to ravish, or by fraud betray;
For when success a lover's toil attends,
Few ask, if fraud or force attained his ends.
For this, ere Phœbus rose, he had implored
Propitious Heaven, and every power adored;
But chiefly Love—to Love an altar built,
Of twelve vast French romances, neatly gilt.
There lay three garters, half a pair of gloves;
And all the trophies of his former loves:
With tender *billets doux* he lights the pyre,
And breathes three amorous sighs to raise the fire.
Then prostrate falls, and begs with ardent eyes
Soon to obtain, and long possess the prize:
The powers gave ear, and granted half his prayer,
The rest, the winds dispersed in empty air.
But now secure the painted vessel glides,
The sunbeams trembling on the floating tides;
While melting music steals upon the sky,
And softened sounds along the waters die;
Smooth flow the waves, the zephyrs gently play,
Belinda smiled, and all the world was gay.
All but the Sylph—with careful thoughts oppressed,
The impending woe sat heavy on his breast.
He summons straight his denizens of air;
The lucid squadrons round the sails repair:
Soft o'er the shrouds aerial whispers breathe,
That seemed but zephyrs to the train beneath.
Some to the sun their insect-wings unfold,
Waft on the breeze, or sink in clouds of gold;
Transparent forms, too fine for mortal sight,
Their fluid bodies half dissolved in light,
Loose to the wind their airy garments flew,
Thin glittering textures of the filmy dew,
Dipped in the richest tincture of the skies,

Where light disports in ever-mingling dyes;
While every beam new transient colours flings,
Colours that change whene'er they wave their wings.
Amid the circle, on the gilded mast,
Superior by the head, was Ariel placed;
His purple pinions opening to the sun,
He raised his azure wand, and thus begun:
"Ye Sylphs and Sylphids, to your chief give ear!
Fays, Fairies, Genii, Elves, and Demons, hear!
Ye know the spheres, and various tasks assigned
By laws eternal to the aerial kind.
Some in the fields of purest ether play,
And bask and whiten in the blaze of day.
Some guide the course of wandering orbs on high,
Or roll the planets through the boundless sky.
Some, less refined, beneath the moon's pale light
Pursue the stars that shoot athwart the night,
Or suck the mists in grosser air below,
Or dip their pinions in the painted bow,
Or brew fierce tempests on the wintry main,
Or o'er the glebe distil the kindly rain.
Others on earth o'er human race preside,
Watch all their ways, and all their actions guide:
Of these the chief the care of nations own,
And guard with arms divine the British throne.
"Our humbler province is to tend the fair,
Not a less pleasing, though less glorious care;
To save the powder from too rude a gale,
Nor let the imprisoned essences exhale;
To draw fresh colours from the vernal flowers;
To steal from rainbows, ere they drop in showers
A brighter wash; to curl their waving hairs,
Assist their blushes and inspire their airs;
Nay, oft, in dreams, invention we bestow,
To change a flounce, or add a furbelow.
"This day, black omens threat the brightest fair
That e'er deserved a watchful spirit's care;

Some dire disaster, or by force, or slight;
But what, or where, the Fates have wrapped in night.
Whether the nymph shall break Diana's law,
Or some frail china jar receive a flaw;
Or stain her honour or her new brocade;
Forget her prayers, or miss a masquerade;
Or lose her heart, or necklace, at a ball;
Or whether Heaven has doomed that Shock must fall.
Haste, then, ye Spirits! to your charge repair:
The fluttering fan be Zephyretta's care;
The drops to thee, Brillante, we consign;
And, Momentilla, let the watch be thine;
Do thou, Crispissa, tend her favourite lock;
Ariel himself shall be the guard of Shock.
"To fifty chosen Sylphs, of special note,
We trust the important charge, the petticoat:
Oft have we known that seven-fold fence to fail,
Though stiff with hoops, and armed with ribs of whale;
Form a strong line about the silver bound,
And guard the wide circumference around.
"Whatever spirit, careless of his charge,
His post neglects, or leaves the fair at large,
Shall feel sharp vengeance soon o'ertake his sins,
Be stopped in vials, or transfixed with pins;
Or plunged in lakes of bitter washes lie,
Or wedged whole ages in a bodkin's eye:
Gums and pomatums shall his flight restrain,
While clogged he beats his silken wings in vain:
Or alum styptics with contracting power
Shrink his thin essence like a rivelled flower:
Or, as Ixion fixed, the wretch shall feel
The giddy motion of the whirling mill,
In fumes of burning chocolate shall glow,
And tremble at the sea that froths below!"
He spoke: the spirits from the sails descend;
Some, orb in orb, around the nymph extend;

Some thrid the mazy ringlets of her hair;
Some hang upon the pendants of her ear;
[illegible]
[illegible]

CANTO III

Close by those meads, for ever crowned with flowers,
Where Thames with pride surveys his rising towers,
There stands a structure of majestic frame,
Which from the neighbouring Hampton takes its name.
Here Britain's statesmen oft the fall foredoom
Of foreign tyrants, and of nymphs at home;
Here thou, great ANNA! whom three realms obey,
Dost sometimes counsel take—and sometimes tea.
  Hither the heroes and the nymphs resort,
To taste awhile the pleasures of a Court;
In various talk the instructive hours they passed,
Who gave the ball, or paid the visit last;
One speaks the glory of the British Queen,
And one describes a charming Indian screen;
A third interprets motions, looks, and eyes;
At every word a reputation dies.
Snuff, or the fan, supply each pause of chat,
With singing, laughing, ogling, and all that.
  Meanwhile, declining from the noon of day,
The sun obliquely shoots his burning ray;
The hungry judges soon the sentence sign,
And wretches hang that jurymen may dine;
The merchant from the Exchange returns in peace,
And the long labours of the toilet cease.
Belinda now, whom thirst of fame invites,
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

Straight the three bands prepare in arms to join,
Each band the number of the sacred nine.

Soon as she spreads her hand, the aerial guard
Descend, and sit on each important card:
First Ariel perched upon a Matadore,
Then each according to the rank they bore;
For Sylphs, yet mindful of their ancient race,
Are, as when women, wondrous fond of place.
  Behold, four Kings in majesty revered,
With hoary whiskers and a forky beard;
And four fair Queens, whose hands sustain a flower,
The expressive emblem of their softer power;
Four Knaves in garbs succinct, a trusty band;
Caps on their heads, and halberts in their hand;
And parti-coloured troops, a shining train,
Draw forth to combat on the velvet plain.
  The skilful nymph reviews her force with care:
Let Spades be trumps! she said, and trumps they were.
  Now move to war her sable Matadores,
In show like leaders of the swarthy Moors.
Spadillio first, unconquerable lord!
Led off two captive trumps, and swept the board.
As many more Manillio forced to yield,
And marched a victor from the verdant field.
Him Basto followed; but his fate more hard
Gained but one trump and one plebeian card.
With his broad sabre next, a chief in years,
The hoary Majesty of Spades appears,
Puts forth one manly leg, to sight revealed,
The rest, his many-coloured robe concealed.
The rebel Knave, who dares his prince engage,
Proves the just victim of his royal rage.
Ev'n mighty Pam, that kings and queens o'erthrew,
And mowed down armies in the fights of Loo,
Sad chance of war! now destitute of aid,
Falls undistinguished by the victor Spade!
  Thus far both armies to Belinda yield;
Now to the Baron fate inclines the field.
His warlike Amazon her host invades,

The imperial consort of the crown of Spades.
The Club's black tyrant first her victim died,
Spite of his haughty mien, and barbarous pride:
What boots the regal circle on his head,
His giant limbs, in state unwieldy spread;
That long behind he trails his pompous robe,
And of all monarchs only grasps the globe?
  The Baron now his Diamonds pours apace!
The embroidered King who shows but half his face,
And his refulgent Queen, with powers combined,
Of broken troops an easy conquest find.
Clubs, Diamonds, Hearts, in wild disorder seen,
With throngs promiscuous strow the level green.
Thus when dispersed a routed army runs,
Of Asia's troops, and Afric's sable sons,
With like confusion different nations fly,
Of various habit, and of various dye,
The pierced battalions disunited fall,
In heaps on heaps; one fate o'erwhelms them all.
  The Knave of Diamonds tries his wily arts,
And wins (oh, shameful chance!) the Queen of Hearts.
At this, the blood the virgin's cheek forsook,
A livid paleness spreads o'er all her look;
She sees, and trembles at the approaching ill,
Just in the jaws of ruin, and Codille.
And now (as oft in some distempered state)
On one nice trick depends the general fate:
An Ace of Hearts steps forth: the King unseen
Lurked in her hand, and mourned his captive Queen:
He springs to vengeance with an eager pace,
And falls like thunder on the prostrate Ace.
The nymph exulting fills with shouts the sky;
The walls, the woods, and long canals reply.
  Oh, thoughtless mortals! ever blind to fate,
Too soon dejected, and too soon elate.
Sudden these honours shall be snatched away,
And cursed for ever this victorious day.

CANTO IV

But anxious cares the pensive nymph oppressed,
And secret passions laboured in her breast.
Not youthful kings in battle seized alive,
Not scornful virgins who their charms survive,
Not ardent lovers robbed of all their bliss,
Not ancient ladies when refused a kiss,
Not tyrants fierce that unrepenting die,
Not Cynthia when her manteau's pinned awry,
E'er felt such rage, resentment, and despair,
As thou, sad virgin! for thy ravished hair.
For, that sad moment, when the Sylphs withdrew,
And Ariel weeping from Belinda flew,
Umbriel, a dusky, melancholy sprite,
As ever sullied the fair face of light,
Down to the central earth, his proper scene,
Repaired to search the gloomy Cave of Spleen.
Swift on his sooty pinions flits the Gnome,
And in a vapour reached the dismal dome.
No cheerful breeze this sullen region knows,
The dreaded east is all the wind that blows.
Here in a grotto, sheltered close from air,
And screened in shades from day's detested glare,
She sighs for ever on her pensive bed,
Pain at her side, and Megrim at her head.
Two handmaids wait the throne: alike in place,
But differing far in figure and in face.
Here stood Ill-nature like an ancient maid,
Her wrinkled form in black and white arrayed;
With store of prayers, for mornings, nights, and noon
Her hand is filled; her bosom with lampoons.
There Affectation, with a sickly mien,
Shows in her cheek the roses of eighteen,
Practised to lisp, and hang the head aside,
Faints into airs, and languishes with pride,
On the rich quilt sinks with becoming woe,

Wrapped in a gown, for sickness, and for show.
The fair ones feel such maladies as these,
When each new night-dress gives a new disease.

A constant vapour o'er the palace flies;
Strange phantoms rising as the mists arise;
Dreadful, as hermits' dreams in haunted shades,
Or bright, as visions of expiring maids.
Now glaring fiends, and snakes on rolling spires,
Pale spectres, gaping tombs, and purple fires:
Now lakes of liquid gold, Elysian scenes,
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
One bent; the handle this, and that the spout:
A pipkin there, like Homer's tripod walks;
Here sighs a jar, and there a goose-pie talks:

Safe passed the Gnome through this fantastic band,
A branch of healing spleenwort in his hand.
Then thus addressed the power: "Hail, wayward Queen!
Who rule the sex to fifty from fifteen;
Parent of vapours, and of female wit,
Who give the hysteric, or poetic fit,
On various tempers act by various ways,
Make some take physic, others scribble plays;
Who cause the proud their visits to delay,
And send the godly in a pet to pray;
A nymph there is, that all thy power disdains,
And thousands more in equal mirth maintains.
But oh! if e'er thy Gnome could spoil a grace,
Or raise a pimple on a beauteous face,
Like citron-waters matron's cheeks inflame,
Or change complexions at a losing game;
If e'er with airy horns I planted heads,
Or rumpled petticoats, or tumbled beds,

Or caused suspicion when no soul was rude,
Or discomposed the head-dress of a prude,
Or e'er to costive lap-dog gave disease,
Which not the tears of brightest eyes could ease;
Hear me, and touch Belinda with chagrin,
That single act gives half the world the spleen."
  The Goddess with a discontented air
Seems to reject him, though she grants his prayer.
A wondrous bag with both her hands she binds,
Like that where once Ulysses held the winds;
There she collects the force of female lungs,
Sighs, sobs, and passions, and the war of tongues.
A vial next she fills with fainting fears,
Soft sorrows, melting griefs, and flowing tears.
The Gnome rejoicing bears her gifts away,
Spreads his black wings, and slowly mounts to day
  Sunk in Thalestris' arms the nymph he found,
Her eyes dejected, and her hair unbound.
Full o'er their heads the swelling bag he rent,
And all the Furies issued at the vent.
Belinda burns with more than mortal ire,
And fierce Thalestris fans the rising fire.
"O wretched maid!" she spread her hands, and c
(While Hampton's echoes, "Wretched maid!" re
"Was it for this you took such constant care
The bodkin, comb, and essence to prepare?
For this your locks in paper durance bound?
For this with torturing irons wreathed around?
For this with fillets strained your tender head,
And bravely bore the double loads of lead?
Gods! shall the ravisher display your hair,
While the fops envy and the ladies stare!
Honour forbid! at whose unrivalled shrine
Ease, pleasure, virtue, all our sex resign.
Methinks already I your tears survey,
Already hear the horrid things they say,
Already see you a degraded toast,

And all your honour in a whisper lost!
How shall I, then, your helpless fame defend?
'Twill then be infamy to seem your friend!
And shall this prize, the inestimable prize,
Exposed through crystal to the gazing eyes,
And heightened by the diamond's circling rays,
[illegible] hand for ever blaze?
[illegible]
[illegible]
Sooner let earth, air, sea, to chaos fall,
Men, monkeys, lap-dogs, parrots, perish all!"
  She said: then raging to Sir Plume repairs,
And bids her beau demand the precious hairs:
(Sir Plume, of amber snuff-box justly vain,
And the nice conduct of a clouded cane)
With earnest eyes, and round unthinking face,
He first the snuff-box opened, then the case,
And then broke out—"My Lord, why, what the devil
Confound the lock! 'fore Gad, you must be civil!
Plague on't! 'tis past a jest—nay prithee, pox!
Give her the hair"—he spoke, and rapped his box.
"It grieves me much" (replied the peer again)
"Who speaks so well should ever speak in vain.
But by this lock, this sacred lock, I swear,
(Which never more shall join its parted hair;
Which never more its honours shall renew,
Clipped from the lovely head where late it grew)
That while my nostrils draw the vital air,
This hand, which won it, shall for ever wear."
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
He breaks the vial whence the sorrows flow.
Then see! the nymph in beauteous grief appears,
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

"For ever cursed be this detested day,
Which snatched my best, my favourite curl away!
Happy! ah, ten times happy had I been,
If Hampton-Court these eyes had never seen!
Yet am not I the first mistaken maid,
By love of courts to numerous ills betrayed.
Oh, had I rather unadmired remained
In some lone isle, or distant northern land;
Where the gilt chariot never marks the way,
Where none learn ombre, none e'er taste Bohea!
There kept my charms concealed from mortal eye,
Like roses that in deserts bloom and die.
What moved my mind with youthful lords to roam?
Oh, had I stayed, and said my prayers at home!
'Twas this the morning omens seemed to tell:
Thrice from my trembling hand the patch-box fell;
The tottering china shook without a wind,
Nay, Poll sat mute, and Shock was most unkind!
A Sylph too warned me of the threats of Fate,
In mystic visions, now believed too late!
See the poor remnants of these slighted hairs!
My hands shall rend what ev'n thy rapine spares:
These in two sable ringlets taught to break,
Once gave new beauties to the snowy neck;
The sister-lock now sits uncouth, alone,
And in its fellow's fate foresees its own;
Uncurled it hangs, the fatal shears demands,
And tempts, once more, thy sacrilegious hands.
Oh, hadst thou, cruel! been content to seize
Hairs less in sight, or any hairs but these!"

CANTO V

She said: the pitying audience melt in tears;
But Fate and Jove had stopped the Baron's ears.
In vain Thalestris with reproach assails,
For who can move when fair Belinda fails?

Not half so fixed the Trojan could remain,
While Anna begged and Dido raged in vain.
Then grave Clarissa graceful waved her fan;
Silence ensued, and thus the nymph began:
"Say, why are Beauties praised and honoured most,
The wise man's passion, and the vain man's toast?
Why decked with all that land and sea afford,
Why angels called, and angel-like adored?
Why round our coaches crowd the white-gloved beaux?
Why bows the side-box from its inmost rows?
How vain are all these glories, all our pains,
Unless good sense preserve what beauty gains;
That men may say, when we the front-box grace,
'Behold the first in virtue as in face!'
Oh! if to dance all night, and dress all day,
Charmed the small-pox, or chased old age away;
Who would not scorn what housewife's cares produce,
Or who would learn one earthly thing of use?
To patch, nay ogle, might become a saint,
Nor could it sure be such a sin to paint.
But since, alas! frail beauty must decay,
Curled or uncurled, since locks will turn to grey;
Since painted, or not painted, all shall fade,
And she who scorns a man, must die a maid;
What then remains, but well our power to use,
And keep good-humour still, whate'er we lose?
And trust me, dear! good-humour can prevail,
When airs, and flights, and screams, and scolding fail.
Beauties in vain their pretty eyes may roll;
Charms strike the sight, but merit wins the soul."
So spoke the dame, but no applause ensued;
Belinda frowned, Thalestris called her prude.
"To arms, to arms!" the fierce virago cries,
And swift as lightning to the combat flies.
All side in parties, and begin the attack:
Fans clap, silks rustle, and tough whalebones crack;
Heroes' and heroines' shouts confusedly rise,

And bass and treble voices strike the skies.
No common weapons in their hands are found,
Like gods they fight, nor dread a mortal wound.
So when bold Homer makes the gods engage,
And heavenly breasts with human passions rage;
'Gainst Pallas, Mars; Latona, Hermes arms;
And all Olympus rings with loud alarms:
Jove's thunder roars, heaven trembles all around,
Blue Neptune storms, the bellowing deeps resound:
Earth shakes her nodding towers, the ground gives way,
And the pale ghosts start at the flash of day!
Triumphant Umbriel on a sconce's height
Clapped his glad wings, and sate to view the figh
Propped on their bodkin spears, the Sprites surve
The growing combat, or assist the fray.
While through the press enraged Thalestris flie
And scatters death around from both her eyes,
A beau and witling perished in the throng,
One died in metaphor, and one in song.
"O cruel nymph! a living death I bear,"
Cried Dapperwit, and sunk beside his chair.
A mournful glance Sir Fopling upwards cast,
"Those eyes are made so killing"—was his last.
Thus on Mæander's flowery margin lies
The expiring swan, and as he sings he dies.
When bold Sir Plume had drawn Clarissa dow
Chloe stepped in, and killed him with a frown;
She smiled to see the doughty hero slain,
But, at her smile, the beau revived again.
Now Jove suspends his golden scales in air,
Weighs the men's wits against the lady's hair:
The doubtful beam long nods from side to side;
At length the wits mount up, the hairs subside.
See fierce Belinda on the Baron flies,
With more than usual lightning in her eyes:
Nor feared the chief the unequal fight to try,
Who sought no more than on his foe to die.

But this bold lord with manly strength endued,
She with one finger and a thumb subdued:
Just where the breath of life his nostrils drew,
A charge of snuff the wily virgin threw;
The Gnomes direct, to every atom just,
The pungent grains of titillating dust.
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
And drew a deadly bodkin from her side.
(The same, his ancient personage to deck,
Her great-great-grandsire wore about his neck,
In three seal-rings; which after, melted down,
Formed a vast buckle for his widow's gown:
Her infant grandame's whistle next it grew,
The bells she jingled, and the whistle blew;
Then in a bodkin graced her mother's hairs,
Which long she wore, and now Belinda wears.)
"Boast not my fall" (he cried), "insulting foe!
Thou by some other shalt be laid as low.
Nor think, to die dejects my lofty mind:
All that I dread is leaving you behind!
Rather than so, ah, let me still survive,
And burn in Cupid's flames—but burn alive."
"Restore the Lock!" she cries; and all around
"Restore the Lock!" the vaulted roofs rebound.
Not fierce Othello in so loud a strain
Roared for the handkerchief that caused his pain.
But see how oft ambitious aims are crossed,
And chiefs contend till all the prize is lost!
The lock, obtained with guilt, and kept with pain,
In every place is sought, but sought in vain:
With such a prize no mortal must be blessed,
So Heaven decrees! with Heaven who can contest?
Some thought it mounted to the lunar sphere,
Since all things lost on earth are treasured there.
There heroes' wits are kept in ponderous vases,

And beaus' in snuff-boxes and tweezer-cases.
There broken vows, and death-bed alms are found,
And lovers' hearts with ends of riband bound,
The courtier's promises, and sick man's prayers,
The smiles of harlots, and the tears of heirs,
Cages for gnats, and chains to yoke a flea,
Dried butterflies, and tomes of casuistry.
  But trust the Muse—she saw it upward rise,
Though marked by none but quick, poetic eyes:
(So Rome's great founder to the heavens withdrew,
To Proculus alone confessed in view)
A sudden star, it shot through liquid air,
And drew behind a radiant trail of hair.
Not Berenice's locks first rose so bright,
The heavens bespangling with dishevelled light.
The Sylphs behold it kindling as it flies,
And pleased pursue its progress through the skies.
  This the *beau monde* shall from the Mall survey,
And hail with music its propitious ray;
This the blest lover shall for Venus take,
And send up vows from Rosamonda's lake.
This Partridge soon shall view in cloudless skies,
When next he looks through Galileo's eyes;
And hence the egregious wizard shall foredoom
The fate of Louis, and the fall of Rome.
  Then cease, bright nymph! to mourn thy ravished hair,
Which adds new glory to the shining sphere!
Not all the tresses that fair head can boast
Shall draw such envy as the lock you lost.
For after all the murders of your eye,
When, after millions slain, yourself shall die;
When those fair suns shall set, as set they must,
And all those tresses shall be laid in dust,
This lock, the Muse shall consecrate to fame,
And 'midst the stars inscribe Belinda's name.

ALEXANDER POPE

ELEGY WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
  The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,
The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,
  And leaves the world to darkness, and to me.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
  And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
  And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds.

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tower
  The moping owl does to the moon complain
Of such as, wandering near her secret bower,
  Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
  Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap,
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
  The rude Forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing Morn,
  [illegible]
[illegible]
  [illegible]

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
  Or busy housewife ply her evening care:
No children run to lisp their sire's return,
  Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,
  Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke;
How jocund did they drive their team afield!
  How bow'd the woods beneath their sturdy stroke!

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
  Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
  The short and simple annals of the Poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
  And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Awaits alike th' inevitable hour:—
  The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye Proud, impute to these the fault
  If Memory o'er their tomb no trophies raise,
Where through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault
  The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.

Can storied urn or animated bust
  Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
Can Honour's voice provoke the silent dust,
  Or Flattery soothe the dull cold ear of Death?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
  Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;
Hands, that the rod of empire might have sway'd,
  Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre:

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page
  Rich with the spoils of time did ne'er unroll;
Chill Penury repress'd their noble rage,
  And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene
  The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear:
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
  And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village-Hampden, that with dauntless breast
  The little tyrant of his fields withstood,
Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,
  Some Cromwell, guiltless of his country's blood.

Th' applause of list'ning senates to command,
  The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
  And read their history in a nation's eyes,

Their lot forbad: nor circumscribed alone
  Their growing virtues, but their crimes confined;
Forbad to wade through slaughter to a throne,
  And shut the gates of mercy on mankind,

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,
  To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,
Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride
  With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,
  Their sober wishes never learn'd to stray;
Along the cool sequester'd vale of life
  They kept the noiseless tenour of their way.

Yet e'en these bones from insult to protect
  Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture deck'd,
  Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.

Their name, their years, spelt by th' unletter'd Muse,
  The place of fame and elegy supply:
And many a holy text around she strews,
  That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who, to dumb forgetfulness a prey,
  This pleasing anxious being e'er resign'd,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
  Nor cast one longing lingering look behind?

[illegible]
  [illegible]
[illegible]
  E'en in our ashes live their wonted fires

For thee, who, mindful of th’ unhonour’d dead,
Dost in these lines their artless tale relate;
If chance, by lonely contemplation led,
Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate,

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,
“ Oft have we seen him at the peep of daw
Brushing with hasty steps the dews away,
To meet the sun upon the upland lawn;

“ There at the foot of yonder nodding beech
That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
His listless length at noontide would he stretch,
And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

“ Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,
Muttering his wayward fancies he would rove;
Now drooping, woeful wan, like one forlorn,
Or crazed with care, or cross’d in hopeless love

“ One morn I miss’d him on the custom’d hill,
Along the heath, and near his favourite tree;
Another came; nor yet beside the rill,
Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he;

“ The next with dirges due in sad array
Slow through the church-way path we saw
borne,—
Approach and read (for thou canst read) the
Graved on the stone beneath yon aged th

THE EPITAPH

Here rests his head upon the lap of Earth
A Youth, to Fortune and to Fame unk
Fair Science frown’d not on his humble
And Melancholy mark’d him for her

Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere;
  Heaven did a recompense as largely send:
He gave to Misery all he had, a tear,
  He gain'd from Heaven, 'twas all he wish'd, a friend.

No farther seek his merits to disclose,
  Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,
(There they alike in trembling hope repose,)
  The bosom of his Father and his God.

THOMAS GRAY

THE BARD

A PINDARIC ODE

I. 1

"RUIN seize thee, ruthless King!
  Confusion on thy banners wait!
Tho' fann'd by Conquest's crimson wing
  They mock the air with idle state.
Helm, nor hauberk's twisted mail,
Nor e'en thy virtues, tyrant, shall avail
To save thy secret soul from nightly fears,
From Cambria's curse, from Cambria's tears!"
—Such were the sounds that o'er the crested pride
  Of the first Edward scatter'd wild dismay,
As down the steep of Snowdon's shaggy side
  He wound with toilsome march his long array:—
Stout Glo'ster stood aghast in speechless trance;
"To arms!" cried Mortimer, and couch'd his quivering
    lance.

I. 2

  On a rock, whose haughty brow
Frowns o'er old Conway's foaming flood,
  [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
Stream'd like a meteor to the troubled air;)

And with a master's hand and prophet's fire
Struck the deep sorrows of his lyre:
"Hark, how each giant oak and desert cave
Sighs to the torrent's awful voice beneath!
O'er thee, O King! their hundred arms they wave,
Revenge on thee in hoarser murmurs breathe;
Vocal no more, since Cambria's fatal day,
To high-born Hoel's harp, or soft Llewellyn's lay.

I. 3

"Cold is Cadwallo's tongue,
That hush'd the stormy main:
Brave Urien sleeps upon his craggy bed:
Mountains, ye mourn in vain
Modred, whose magic song
Made huge Plinlimmon bow his cloud-topt head.
On dreary Arvon's shore they lie
Smear'd with gore and ghastly pale:
Far, far aloof the affrighted ravens sail;
The famish'd eagle screams, and passes by.
Dear lost companions of my tuneful art,
Dear as the light that visits these sad eyes,
Dear as the ruddy drops that warm my heart,
Ye died amidst your dying country's cries—
No more I weep. They do not sleep;
On yonder cliffs, a grisly band,
I see them sit; they linger yet,
Avengers of their native land:
With me in dreadful harmony they join,
And weave with bloody hands the tissue of thy line.

II. 1

"Weave the warp and weave the woof,
The winding-sheet of Edward's race:
Give ample room and verge enough
The characters of hell to trace.

Mark the year and mark the night
When Severn shall re-echo with affright
The shrieks of death thro' Berkley's roofs that ring,
Shrieks of an agonizing king!
  She-wolf of France, with unrelenting fangs,
That tear'st the bowels of thy mangled mate,
  From thee be born, who o'er thy country hangs
The scourge of Heaven! What terrors round him wait!
Amazement in his van, with Flight combined,
And Sorrow's faded form, and Solitude behind.

II. 2

"Mighty victor, mighty lord,
  Low on his funeral couch he lies!
No pitying heart, no eye, afford
  A tear to grace his obsequies.
Is the sable warrior fled?
Thy son is gone. He rests among the dead.
The swarm that in thy noon-tide beam were born?
—Gone to salute the rising morn.
Fair laughs the Morn, and soft the zephyr blows,
  While proudly riding o'er the azure realm
In gallant trim the gilded Vessel goes:
  [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

II. 3

  "Fill high the sparkling bowl,
The rich repast prepare;
  Reft of a crown, he yet may share the feast:
Close by the regal chair
  Fell Thirst and Famine scowl
  A baleful smile upon their baffled guest.

Heard ye the din of battle bray,
  Lance to lance, and horse to horse?
  Long years of havoc urge their destined course,
And thro' the kindred squadrons mow their way.
  Ye towers of Julius, London's lasting shame,
With many a foul and midnight murder fed,
  Revere his Consort's faith, his Father's fame,
And spare the meek usurper's holy head!
Above, below, the rose of snow,
  Twined with her blushing foe, we spread;
The bristled boar in infant-gore
  Wallows beneath the thorny shade.
Now, brothers, bending o'er the accursèd loom,
Stamp we our vengeance deep, and ratify his doom.

III. 1

"Edward, lo! to sudden fate
  (Weave we the woof; the thread is spun;)
Half of thy heart we consecrate.
  (The web is wove; the work is done.)
Stay, O stay! nor thus forlorn
Leave me unbless'd, unpitied, here to mourn:
In yon bright track that fires the western skies
They melt, they vanish from my eyes.
But O! what solemn scenes on Snowdon's height
  Descending slow their glittering skirts unroll?
Visions of glory, spare my aching sight,
  Ye unborn ages, crowd not on my soul!
No more our long-lost Arthur we bewail:—
All hail, ye genuine kings! Britannia's issue, hail!

III. 2

  "Girt with many a baron bold
Sublime their starry fronts they rear;
  And gorgeous dames, and statesmen old
In bearded majesty, appear.

In the midst a form divine!
Her eye proclaims her of the Briton-Line:
Her lion-port, her awe-commanding face,
Attemper'd sweet to virgin-grace.
What strings symphonious tremble in the air,
  What strains of vocal transport round her play?
Hear from the grave, great Taliessin, hear;
  They breathe a soul to animate thy clay.
Bright Rapture calls, and soaring as she sings,
Waves in the eye of Heaven her many-colour'd wings.

III. 3

"The verse adorn again
  Fierce War, and faithful Love,
And Truth severe, by fairy Fiction drest.
  In buskin'd measures move
Pale Grief, and pleasing Pain,
With Horror, tyrant of the throbbing breast.
A voice as of the cherub-choir
  Gales from blooming Eden bear,
  And distant warblings lessen on my ear,

To-morrow he repairs the golden flood
  And warms the nations with redoubled ray.
Enough for me: with joy I see
  The different doom our fates assign:
Be thine Despair and sceptred Care;
  To triumph and to die are mine."
—He spoke, and headlong from the mountain's height
Deep in the roaring tide he plunged to endless night.

TH

THE DESERTED VILLAGE

SWEET AUBURN! loveliest village of the plain,
Where health and plenty cheer'd the labouring swain,
Where smiling spring its earliest visit paid,
And parting summer's lingering blooms delay'd:
Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease,
Seats of my youth, when every sport could please,
How often have I loiter'd o'er thy green,
Where humble happiness endear'd each scene;
How often have I paus'd on every charm,
The shelter'd cot, the cultivated farm,
The never-failing brook, the busy mill,
The decent church that topp'd the neighbouring hill,
The hawthorn bush, with seats beneath the shade,
For talking age and whisp'ring lovers made;
How often have I bless'd the coming day,
When toil remitting lent its turn to play,
And all the village train, from labour free,
Led up their sports beneath the spreading tree;
While many a pastime circled in the shade,
The young contending as the old survey'd;
And many a gambol frolick'd o'er the ground,
And sleights of art and feats of strength went round;
And still as each repeated pleasure tir'd,
Succeeding sports the mirthful band inspir'd;
The dancing pair that simply sought renown,
By holding out to tire each other down;
The swain mistrustless of his smutted face,
While secret laughter titter'd round the place;
The bashful virgin's side-long looks of love,
The matron's glance that would those looks reprove:
These were thy charms, sweet village; sports like these,
With sweet succession, taught e'en toil to please;
These round thy bowers their cheerful influence shed,
These were thy charms—but all these charms are fled.

Sweet smiling village, loveliest of the lawn,
Thy sports are fled, and all thy charms withdrawn:
Amidst thy bowers the tyrant's hand is seen,
And desolation saddens all thy green:
One only master grasps the whole domain,
And half a tillage stints thy smiling plain:
No more thy glassy brook reflects the day,
But, chok'd with sedges, works its weedy way.
Along thy glades, a solitary guest,
The hollow-sounding bittern guards its nest;
Amidst thy desert walks the lapwing flies,
And tires their echoes with unvaried cries.
Sunk are thy bowers in shapeless ruin all,
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

Ill fares the land, to hast'ning ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay:
Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade;
A breath can make them, as a breath has made;
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroy'd, can never be supplied.

A time there was, ere England's griefs began,
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
His best companions, innocence and health;
And his best riches, ignorance of wealth.

But times are alter'd; trade's unfeeling train
Usurp the land and dispossess the swain;
Along the lawn, where scatter'd hamlets rose,
Unwieldy wealth, and cumbrous pomp repose;
And every want to opulence allied,
And every pang that folly pays to pride.

Those gentle hours that plenty bade to bloom,
Those calm desires that ask'd but little room;
Those healthful sports that grac'd the peaceful scene,
Liv'd in each look, and brighten'd all the green;
These, far departing, seek a kinder shore,
And rural mirth and manners are no more.

Sweet AUBURN! parent of the blissful hour,
Thy glades forlorn confess the tyrant's power.
Here as I take my solitary rounds,
Amidst thy tangling walks, and ruin'd grounds,
And, many a year elaps'd, return to view
Where once the cottage stood, the hawthorn grew,
Remembrance wakes with all her busy train,
Swells at my breast, and turns the past to pain.

In all my wand'rings round this world of care,
In all my griefs—and GOD has given my share—
I still had hopes my latest hours to crown,
Amidst these humble bowers to lay me down;
To husband out life's taper at the close,
And keep the flame from wasting by repose.
I still had hopes, for pride attends us still,
Amidst the swains to show my book-learn'd ski
Around my fire an evening group to draw,
And tell of all I felt, and all I saw;
And, as a hare, whom hounds and horns pursu
Pants to the place from whence at first she fle
I still had hopes, my long vexations pass'd,
Here to return—and die at home at last.

O blest retirement, friend to life's decline
Retreats from care, that never must be mi
How happy he who crowns in shades like
A youth of labour with an age of ease;
Who quits a world where strong tempta
nce 'tis hard to combat, learns to

For him no wretches, born to work and weep,
Explore the mine, or tempt the dangerous deep;
No surly porter stands in guilty state
To spurn imploring famine from the gate;
But on he moves to meet his latter end,
Angels around befriending Virtue's friend;
Bends to the grave with unperceiv'd decay,
While Resignation gently slopes the way;
And, all his prospects brightening to the last,
His Heaven commences ere the world be pass'd!

Sweet was the sound, when oft at evening's close,
Up yonder hill the village murmur rose;
There, as I pass'd with careless steps and slow,
The mingling notes came soften'd from below;
The swain responsive as the milk-maid sung,
The sober herd that low'd to meet their young;
The noisy geese that gabbled o'er the pool;
The playful children just let loose from school;
The watchdog's voice that bay'd the whisp'ring wind,
And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind;
These all in sweet confusion sought the shade,
And fill'd each pause the nightingale had made.
But now the sounds of population fail,
No cheerful murmurs fluctuate in the gale,
No busy steps the grass-grown foot-way tread,
For all the bloomy flush of life is fled.
[illegible]
To strip the brook with mantling cresses spread,
To pick her wintry faggot from the thorn,
To seek her nightly shed, and weep till morn;
She only left of all the harmless train,
The sad historian of the pensive plain.

Near yonder copse, where once the garden smil'd,
And still where many a garden flower grows wild;

There, where a few torn shrubs the place disclose,
The village preacher's modest mansion rose.
A man he was to all the country dear,
And passing rich with forty pounds a year;
Remote from towns he ran his godly race,
Nor e'er had chang'd, nor wished to change his place;
Unpractis'd he to fawn, or seek for power,
By doctrines fashion'd to the varying hour;
Far other aims his heart had learned to prize,
More skill'd to raise the wrètched than to rise.
His house was known to all the vagrant train,
He chid their wand'rings, but reliev'd their pain;
The long-remember'd beggar was his guest,
Whose beard descending swept his aged breast;
The ruin'd spendthrift, now no longer proud,
Claim'd kindred there, and had his claims allow'd;
The broken soldier, kindly bade to stay,
Sat by his fire, and talk'd the night away;
Wept o'er his wounds, or tales of sorrow done,
Shoulder'd his crutch, and show'd how fields were won.
Pleas'd with his guests, the good man learned to glo
And quite forgot their vices in their woe;
Careless their merits, or their faults to scan,
His pity gave ere charity began.

Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride,
And e'en his failings lean'd to Virtue's side;
But in his duty prompt at every call,
He watch'd and wept, he pray'd and felt, for all.
And, as a bird each fond endearment tries
To tempt its new-fledg'd offspring to the skies,
He tried each art, reprov'd each dull delay,
Allur'd to brighter worlds, and led the way.

Beside the bed where parting life was laid,
ow, guilt, and pain, by turns disma

The reverend champion stood. At his control,
Despair and anguish fled the struggling soul;
[illegible]
[illegible]

At church, with meek and unaffected grace,
His looks adorn'd the venerable place;
Truth from his lips prevail'd with double sway,
And fools, who came to scoff, remain'd to pray.
The service pass'd, around the pious man,
With steady zeal, each honest rustic ran;
Even children follow'd with endearing wile,
And pluck'd his gown, to share the good man's
smile.
His ready smile a parent's warmth express'd,
Their welfare pleas'd him, and their cares distress'd
To them his heart, his love, his griefs were given,
[illegible]
[illegible]
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm,
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spre
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.

Beside yon straggling fence that skirts the way,
With blossom'd furze unprofitably gay,
There, in his noisy mansion, skill'd to rule,
The village master taught his little school;
A man severe he was, and stern to view;
I knew him well, and every truant knew;
Well had the boding tremblers learn'd to trace
The day's disasters in his morning face;
Full well they laugh'd, with counterfeited glee,
At all his jokes, for many a joke had he.
Full well the busy whisper, circling round,
Convey'd the dismal tidings when he frown'd:
Yet he was kind; or if severe in aught,
The love he bore to learning was in fault;

No more the farmer's news, the barber's tale;
No more the wood-man's ballad shall prevail;
No more the smith his dusky brow shall clear,
Relax his pond'rous strength, and lean to hear;
The host himself no longer shall be found
Careful to see the mantling bliss go round;
Nor the coy maid, half willing to be press'd,
Shall kiss the cup to pass it to the rest.

Yes! let the rich deride, the proud disdain,
These simple blessings of the lowly train;
To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
One native charm, than all the gloss of art;
Spontaneous joys, where Nature has its play,
The soul adopts, and owns their first-born
sway;
Lightly they frolic o'er the vacant mind,
Unenvied, unmolested, unconfin'd:
But the long pomp, the midnight masquerade,
With all the freaks of wanton wealth array'd,
In these, ere triflers half their wish obtain,
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

Ye friends to truth, ye statesmen, who survey
The rich man's joys increase, the poor's decay,
'Tis yours to judge, how wide the limits stand
Between a splendid and a happy land.
Proud swells the tide with loads of freighted ore
And shouting Folly hails them from her shore;
Hoards, e'en beyond the miser's wish abound,
And rich men flock from all the world around.
Yet count our gains. This wealth is but a name
That leaves our useful products still the same.
Not so the loss. The man of wealth and pride
Takes up a space that many poor supplied;

Space for his lake, his park's extended bounds,
Space for his horses, equipage, and hounds;
The robe that wraps his limbs in silken sloth
Has robb'd the neighbouring fields of half their
    growth,
His seat, where solitary sports are seen,
Indignant spurns the cottage from the green;
Around the world each needful product flies,
For all the luxuries the world supplies:
While thus the land adorn'd for pleasure, all
In barren splendour feebly waits the fall.

As some fair female unadorn'd and plain,
Secure to please while youth confirms her reign,
Slights every borrow'd charm that dress supplies,
Nor shares with art the triumph of her eyes:
But when those charms are pass'd, for charms are f
When time advances, and when lovers fail,
She then shines forth, solicitous to bless,
In all the glaring impotence of dress.
Thus fares the land, by luxury betray'd,
In nature's simplest charms at first array'd,
But verging to decline, its splendours rise,
Its vistas strike, its palaces surprise;
While scourg'd by famine from the smiling land,
The mournful peasant leads his humble band;
And while he sinks, without one arm to save,
The country blooms—a garden, and a grave.

Where then, ah! where, shall poverty reside,
To 'scape the pressure of contiguous pride?
If to some common's fenceless limits stray'd,
He drives his flock to pick the scanty blade,
Those fenceless fields the sons of wealth divide,
And e'en the bare-worn common is denied.

If to the city sped—what waits him there?
To see profusion that he must not share;

To see ten thousand baneful arts combin'd
To pamper luxury, and thin mankind;
To see those joys the sons of pleasure know
Extorted from his fellow creature's woe.
Here, while the courtier glitters in brocade,
There the pale artist plies the sickly trade;
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
Here, richly deck'd, admits the gorgeous train;
Tumultuous grandeur crowds the blazing square,
The rattling chariots clash, the torches glare.
Sure scenes like these no troubles e'er annoy!
Sure these denote one universal joy!
Are these thy serious thoughts?—Ah, turn thine eyes
Where the poor houseless shiv'ring female lies.
She once, perhaps, in village plenty bless'd,
Has wept at tales of innocence distress'd;
Her modest looks the cottage might adorn,
Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the thorn;
Now lost to all; her friends, her virtue fled,
Near her betrayer's door she lays her head,
And, pinch'd with cold, and shrinking from the shower,
With heavy heart deplores that luckless hour,
When idly first, ambitious of the town,
She left her wheel and robes of country brown.

Do thine, sweet AUBURN, thine, the loveliest train,
Do thy fair tribes participate her pain?
E'en now, perhaps, by cold and hunger led,
At proud men's doors they ask a little bread!

Ah, no. To distant climes, a dreary scene,
Where half the convex world intrudes between,
Through torrid tracts with fainting steps they go,
Where wild Altama murmurs to their woe.

Far different there from all that charm'd before,
The various terrors of that horrid shore;
Those blazing suns that dart a downward ray,
And fiercely shed intolerable day;
Those matted woods where birds forget to sing,
But silent bats in drowsy clusters cling;
Those pois'nous fields with rank luxuriance crown'd,
Where the dark scorpion gathers death around;
Where at each step the stranger fears to wake
The rattling terrors of the vengeful snake;
Where crouching tigers wait their hapless prey,
And savage men more murd'rous still than they;
While oft in whirls the mad tornado flies,
Mingling the ravag'd landscape with the skies.
Far different these from every former scene,
The cooling brook, the grassy-vested green,
The breezy covert of the warbling grove,
That only shelter'd thefts of harmless love.

Good Heaven! what sorrows gloom'd that parting d
That call'd them from their native walks away;
When the poor exiles, every pleasure pass'd,
Hung round their bowers, and fondly look'd their last,
And took a long farewell, and wish'd in vain
For seats like these beyond the western main;
And shudd'ring still to face the distant deep,
Return'd and wept, and still return'd to weep.
The good old sire, the first prepar'd to go
To new-found worlds, and wept for others' woe;
But for himself, in conscious virtue brave,
He only wish'd for worlds beyond the grave.
His lovely daughter, lovelier in her tears,
The fond companion of his helpless years,
Silent went next, neglectful of her charms,
And left a lover's for a father's arms.
With louder plaints the mother spoke her woes,
And bless'd the cot where every pleasure rose;

And kiss'd her thoughtless babes with many a tear,
And clasp'd them close, in sorrow doubly dear;
Whilst her fond husband strove to lend relief
In all the silent manliness of grief.

O Luxury! thou curs'd by Heaven's decree,
How ill exchang'd are things like these for thee!
How do thy potions, with insidious joy,
Diffuse their pleasures only to destroy!
Kingdoms, by thee, to sickly greatness grown,
Boast of a florid vigour not their own;
At every draught more large and large they grow,
A bloated mass of rank unwieldy woe;
Till sapp'd their strength, and every part unsound,
Down, down they sink, and spread a ruin round.

E'en now the devastation is begun,
And half the business of destruction done;
E'en now, methinks, as pond'ring here I stand,
I see the rural virtues leave the land:
Down where yon anchoring vessel spreads the sail,
That idly waiting flaps with ev'ry gale,
Downward they move, a melancholy band,
Pass from the shore, and darken all the strand.
Contented toil, and hospitable care,
And kind connubial tenderness, are there;
And piety, with wishes plac'd above,
And steady loyalty, and faithful love.
And thou, sweet Poetry, thou loveliest maid,
Still first to fly where sensual joys invade,
Unfit in these degenerate times of shame,
To catch the heart, or strike for honest fame;
Dear charming nymph, neglected and decried,
My shame in crowds, my solitary pride,
Thou source of all my bliss, and all my woe,
That found'st me poor at first, and keep'st me so;
Thou guide by which the nobler arts excel,
Thou nurse of every virtue, fare thee well!

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That found'st me poor at first, and keep'st me so;
Thou guide by which the nobler arts excel,
Thou nurse of every virtue, fare thee well!

Farewell, and oh! where'er thy voice be tried,
On Torno's cliffs, or Pambamarca's side,
Whether where equinoctial fervours glow,
Or winter wraps the polar world in snow,
Still let thy voice, prevailing over time,
Redress the rigours of th' inclement clime;
Aid slighted truth; with thy persuasive strain
Teach erring man to spurn the rage of gain;
Teach him, that states of native strength possess'd,
Though very poor, may still be very bless'd;
That trade's proud empire hastes to swift decay
As ocean sweeps the labour'd mole away;
While self-dependent power can time defy,
As rocks resist the billows and the sky.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT

INSCRIBED TO R. AIKEN, ESQ.

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
  Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor Grandeur hear, with a disdainful smile,
  The short but simple annals of the Poor.

GRAY

I

My lov'd, my honour'd, much respected friend!
  No mercenary bard his homage pays:
With honest pride I scorn each selfish end;
  My dearest meed, a friend's esteem and praise:
To you I sing, in simple Scottish lays,
  The lowly train in life's sequester'd scene;
The native feelings strong, the guileless ways;
  What Aiken in a cottage would have been:
Ah! tho' his worth unknown, far happier there, I ween.

II

November chill blaws loud wi' angry sugh:
The short'ning winter-day is near a close;
The miry beasts retreating frae the pleugh;
The black'ning trains o' craws to their repose:
[illegible] frae [illegible] labour goes,
[illegible]
[illegible]
Hoping the morn in ease and rest to spend,
And weary, o'er the moor, his course does hameward bend.

III

At length his lonely cot appears in view,
Beneath the shelter of an aged tree:
Th' expectant wee-things, toddlin', stacher thro'
To meet their dad, wi' flichterin' noise an' glee.
His wee bit ingle, blinkin' bonnily,
His clean hearth-stane, his thriftie wifie's smile,
T[illegible] knee,
[illegible]
An' [illegible]

IV

Belyve, the elder bairns come drappin' in,
At service out, amang the farmers roun':
Some ca' the pleugh, some herd, some tentie rin
A cannie errand to a neebor town:
Their eldest hope, their Jenny, woman grown,
In youthfu' bloom, love sparklin' in her e'e,
Comes hame, perhaps, to show a braw new gown,
Or deposit her sair-won penny fee,
To help her parents dear, if they in hardship be.

V

Wi' joy unfeign'd, brothers and sisters meet,
And each for other's weelfare kindly spiers:
The social hours, swift-wing'd, unnotic'd fleet:
Each tells the uncos that he sees or hears;

The parents, partial, eye their hopeful years;
Anticipation forward points the view;
The mother, wi' her needle an' her shears,
Gars auld claes look amaist as weel's the new;—
The father mixes a' wi' admonition due.

VI

Their master's an' their mistress's command,
The younkers a' are warned to obey;
" An' mind their labours wi' an eydent hand,
An' ne'er, tho' out o' sight, to jauk or play:
An' O! be sure to fear the Lord alway!
An' mind your duty, duly, morn an' night!
Lest in temptation's path ye gang astray,
Implore his counsel and assisting might:
They never sought in vain, that sought the Lord aright

VII

But hark! a rap comes gently to the door;
Jenny, wha kens the meaning o' the same,
Tells how a neebor lad cam' o'er the moor,
To do some errands, and convoy her hame.
The wily mother sees the conscious flame
Sparkle in Jenny's e'e, and flush her cheek;
With heart-struck, anxious care, inquires his name,
While Jenny hafflins is afraid to speak;
Weel pleas'd the mother hears, it's nae wild, worthless rake.

VIII

Wi' kindly welcome, Jenny brings him ben:
A strappin' youth; he taks the mother's eye;
Blythe Jenny sees the visit's no ill ta'en;
The father cracks of horses, pleughs, and kye.

Th[illegible] joy,
[illegible] ehave;
Th[illegible]
What makes the youth sae bashfu' an' sae grave;
Weel pleas'd to think her bairn's respected like the lave.

IX

O happy love! where love like this is found!
O heart-felt raptures!—bliss beyond compare!
I've pacèd much this weary, mortal round,
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
'Tis when a youthful, loving, modest pair,
In other's arms, breathe out the tender tale,
Beneath the milk-white thorn that scents the ev'ning gale.

X

Is there, in human form, that bears a heart—
A wretch! a villain! lost to love and truth!
That can, with studied, sly, ensnaring art,
Betray sweet Jenny's unsuspecting youth?
Curse on his perjur'd arts! dissembling smooth!
Are honour, virtue, conscience, all exil'd?
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

XI

But now the supper crowns their simple board,
The halesome parritch, chief o' Scotia's food:
The sowpe their only Hawkie does afford,
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
A[illegible]
He[illegible]

XII

The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face,
They, round the ingle, form a circle wide;
The sire turns o'er, wi' patriarchal grace,
The big ha'-Bible, ance his father's pride;
His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside,
His lyart haffets wearing thin an' bare;
Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,
He wales a portion with judicious care;
And "Let us worship God!" he says, with solemn air.

XIII

They chant their artless notes in simple guise;
They tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim:
Perhaps Dundee's wild warbling measures rise,
Or plaintive Martyrs, worthy of the name,
Or noble Elgin beets the heav'nward flame,
The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays:
Compar'd with these, Italian trills are tame;
The tickl'd ears no heart-felt raptures raise;
Nae unison hae they with our Creator's praise.

XIV

The priest-like father reads the sacred page,
How Abram was the friend of God on high;
Or, Moses bade eternal warfare wage
With Amalek's ungracious progeny;
Or how the royal bard did groaning lie
Beneath the stroke of Heav'n's avenging ire;
Or Job's pathetic plaint, and wailing cry;
Or rapt Isaiah's wild, seraphic fire;
Or other holy seers that tune the sacred lyre.

XV

Perhaps the Christian volume is the theme,
How guiltless blood for guilty man was shed;
How He, who bore in heaven the second name,
Had not on earth whereon to lay his head;

How his first followers and servants sped;
The precepts sage they wrote to many a land:
How *he*, who lone in Patmos banishèd,
Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand,
And heard great Bab'lon's doom pronounc'd by Heaven's command.

XVI

Then kneeling down, to Heaven's Eternal King,
The saint, the father, and the husband prays:
Hope "springs exulting on triumphant wing,"
That thus they all shall meet in future days:
There ever bask in uncreated rays,
No more to sigh, or shed the bitter tear,
Together hymning their Creator's praise,
In such society, yet still more dear;
While circling time moves round in an eternal sphere.

XVII

Compar'd with this, how poor Religion's pride,
In all the pomp of method and of art,
When men display to congregations wide,
Devotion's ev'ry grace, except the heart!
The Pow'r, incensed, the pageant will desert,
The pompous strain, the sacerdotal stole;
But, haply, in some cottage far apart,
May hear, well pleased, the language of the soul;
And in the book of life the inmates poor enrol.

XVIII

Then homeward all take off their sev'ral way;
The youngling cottagers retire to rest:
The parent-pair their secret homage pay,
And proffer up to Heaven the warm request,
That He, who stills the raven's clam'rous nest,
And decks the lily fair in flow'ry pride,
Would, in the way his wisdom sees the best,
For them and for their little ones provide;
But, chiefly, in their hearts with grace divine preside.

XIX

From scenes like these, old Scotia's grandeur springs,
That makes her lov'd at home, rever'd abroad:
Princes and lords are but the breath of kings,
" An honest man's the noblest work of God":
And certes, in fair virtue's heavenly road,
The cottage leaves the palace far behind;
What is a lordling's pomp?—a cumbrous load,
Disguising oft the wretch of human kind,
Studied in arts of hell, in wickedness refin'd!

XX

O Scotia! my dear, my native soil!
For whom my warmest wish to Heaven is sent!
Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil
Be bless'd with health, and peace, and sweet content!
And, O! may Heaven their simple lives prevent
From luxury's contagion, weak and vile!
Then, howe'er crowns and coronets be rent,
A virtuous populace may rise the while,
And stand a wall of fire around their much-lov'd isle.

XXI

O Thou! who poured the patriotic tide
That stream'd thro' Wallace's undaunted heart,
Who dared to nobly stem tyrannic pride,
Or nobly die, the second glorious part:
(The patriot's God peculiarly thou art,
His friend, inspirer, guardian, and reward!)
O never, never, Scotia's realm desert;
But still the patriot, and the patriot bard,
In bright succession raise, her ornament and guard!

ROBERT BURNS

LINES

COMPOSED A FEW MILES ABOVE TINTERN ABBEY, ON REVISITING THE BANKS OF THE WYE DURING A TOUR, JULY 13, 1798

FIVE years have passed; five summers, with the length
Of five long winters! and again I hear
These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs
With a soft inland murmur.—Once again
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
That on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect
The landscape with the quiet of the sky.
The day is come when I again repose
Here, under this dark sycamore, and view
These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-tufts,
Which at this season, with their unripe fruits,
Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves
'Mid groves and copses. Once again I see
These hedgerows, hardly hedgerows, little lines
Of sportive wood run wild: these pastoral farms,
Green to the very door; and wreaths of smoke
Sent up, in silence, from among the trees!
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
The Hermit sits alone.
These beauteous forms,
Through a long absence, have not been to me
As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:
But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;
And passing even into my purer mind,
With tranquil restoration:—feelings too

Of unremembered pleasure: such, perhaps,
As have no slight or trivial influence
On that best portion of a good man's life,
His little, nameless, unremembered, acts
Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,
To them I may have owed another gift,
Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood,
In which the burthen of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,
Is lightened:—that serene and blessed mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on,—
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul:
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.
                                                  If this
Be but a vain belief, yet, oh! how oft—
In darkness and amid the many shapes
Of joyless daylight; when the fretful stir
Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
Have hung upon the beatings of my heart—
How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,
O silvan Wye! thou wanderer through the woods,
How often has my spirit turned to thee!
And now, with gleams of half-extinguished thought,
With many recognitions dim and faint,
And somewhat of a sad perplexity,
The picture of the mind revives again:
While here I stand, not only with the sense
Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts
That in this moment there is life and food
For future years. And so I dare to hope,
Though changed, no doubt, from what I was when first

I came among these hills; when like a roe
I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides
Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,
Wherever nature led: more like a man
Flying from something that he dreads, than one
Who sought the thing he loved. For nature then
(The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,
And their glad animal movements all gone by)
To me was all in all.—I cannot paint
What then I was. The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colours and their forms, were then to me
An appetite; a feeling and a love,
That had no need of a remoter charm,
By thought supplied, nor any interest
Unborrowed from the eye.—That time is past,
And all its aching joys are now no more,
And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur; other gifts
Have followed; for such loss, I would believe,
Abundant recompense. For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
A lover of the meadows and the woods

And mountains; and of all that we behold
From this green earth; of all the mighty world
Of eye and ear—both what they half-create,
And what perceive; well pleased to recognize
In nature and the language of the sense
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being.
                                        Nor perchance,
If I were not thus taught, should I the more
Suffer my genial spirits to decay:
For thou art with me here upon the banks
Of this fair river; thou my dearest Friend,
My dear, dear Friend; and in thy voice I catch
The language of my former heart, and read
My former pleasures in the shooting lights
Of thy wild eyes. Oh! yet a little while
May I behold in thee what I was once,
My dear, dear Sister! and this prayer I make
Knowing that Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege,
Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy: for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith that all which we behold
Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon
Shine on thee in thy solitary walk;
And let the misty mountain-winds be free
To blow against thee: and, in after-years,
When these wild ecstasies shall be matured
Into a sober pleasure; when thy mind

Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,
Thy memory be as a dwelling-place
For all sweet sounds and harmonies; oh! then,
If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts
Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,
And these my exhortations! Nor, perchance—
If I should be where I no more can hear
Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams
Of past existence—wilt thou then forget
That on the banks of this delightful stream
We stood together; and that I, so long
A worshipper of Nature, hither came
Unwearied in that service: rather say
With warmer love—oh! with far deeper zeal
Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget,
That after many wanderings, many years
Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,
And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake!

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

LAODAMIA

WITH sacrifice before the rising morn
Vows have I made by fruitless hope inspired,
And from the infernal gods, 'mid shades forlorn
Of night, my slaughtered Lord have I required:
Celestial pity I again implore;—
Restore him to my sight—great Jove, restore!"

So speaking, and by fervent love endowed
With faith, the Suppliant heavenward lifts her hands;
While, like the sun emerging from a cloud,
Her countenance brightens—and her eye expands,
Her bosom heaves and spreads, her stature grows,
And she expects the issue in repose.

O terror! what hath she perceived? O joy!
What doth she look on—whom doth she behold?
Her hero slain upon the beach of Troy?
His vital presence—his corporeal mould?
It is—if sense deceive her not—'tis He!
And a God leads him, wingèd Mercury!

Mild Hermes spake—and touched her with his wand
That calms all fear; " Such grace hath crowned thy prayer,
Laodamïa! that at Jove's command
Thy Husband walks the paths of upper air:
He comes to tarry with thee three hours' space;
Accept the gift, behold him face to face!"

Forth sprang the impassion'd Queen her Lord to clasp;
Again that consummation she essayed;
But unsubstantial Form eludes her grasp
As often as that eager grasp was made.
The Phantom parts—but parts to reunite,
And reassume his place before her sight.

" Protesilàus, lo! thy guide is gone!
Confirm, I pray, the vision with thy voice;
This is our palace,—yonder is thy throne;
Speak, and the floor thou tread'st on will rejoice.
Not to appal me have the gods bestowed
This precious boon; and blest a sad abode."

" Great Jove, Laodamïa, doth not leave
His gifts imperfect :—Spectre though I be,
I am not sent to scare thee or deceive;
But in reward of thy fidelity;
And something also did my worth obtain;
For fearless virtue bringeth boundless gain.

" Thou knowest, the Delphic oracle foretold
That the first Greek who touchèd the Trojan strand
Should die; but me the threat could not withhold:
A generous cause a victim did demand;

And forth I leapt upon the sandy plain,
A self-devoted chief—by Hector slain."

"Supreme of heroes—bravest, noblest, best!
Thy matchless courage I bewail no more,
Which then, when tens of thousands were deprest
By doubt, propelled thee to the fatal shore;
Thou found'st—and I forgive thee—here thou art—
A nobler counsellor than my poor heart.

"But thou, though capable of sternest deed,
Wert kind as resolute, and good as brave;
And he, whose power restores thee, hath decreed
Thou shouldst elude the malice of the grave:
Redundant are thy locks, thy lips as fair
As when their breath enriched Thessalian air.

"No Spectre greets me,—no vain Shadow this;
Come, blooming Hero, place thee by my side!
Give, on this well-known couch, one nuptial kiss
To me, this day a second time thy bride!"
Jove frown'd in heaven: the conscious Parcæ threw
Upon those roseate lips a Stygian hue.

"This visage tells me that my doom is past;
Nor should the change be mourned, even if the joys
Of sense were able to return as fast
And surely as they vanish. Earth destroys
Those raptures duly—Erebus disdains:
Calm pleasures there abide—majestic pains.

"Be taught, O faithful Consort, to control
Rebellious passion; for the Gods approve
The depth, and not the tumult, of the soul,
A fervent, not ungovernable, love.
Thy transports moderate; and meekly mourn
When I depart, for brief is my sojourn——"

"Ah, wherefore?—Did not Hercules by force
Wrest from the guardian Monster of the tomb
Alcestis, a reanimated corse,
Given back to dwell on earth in vernal bloom?
Medea's spells dispersed the weight of years,
And Æson stood a youth 'mid youthful peers.

"The Gods to us are merciful—and they
Yet further may relent; for mightier far
Than strength of nerve and sinew, or the sway
Of magic, potent over sun and star,
Is love, though oft to agony distrest,
And though his favourite seat be feeble woman's breast.

"But if thou goest, I follow——" "Peace," he said,—
She looked upon him and was calmed and cheered;
The ghastly colour from his lips had fled;
In his deportment, shape, and mien, appeared
Elysian beauty, melancholy grace,
Brought from a pensive though a happy place.

He spake of love, such love as Spirits feel
In worlds whose course is equable and pure;
No fears to beat away—no strife to heal—
The past unsighed for, and the future sure;
Spake of heroic arts in graver mood
Revived, with finer harmony pursued,

Of all that is most beauteous—imaged there
In happier beauty, more pellucid streams,
An ampler ether, a diviner air,
And fields invested with perpetual gleams,
Climes which the sun, who sheds the brightest day
Earth knows, is all unworthy to survey.

Yet there the Soul shall enter which hath earned
That privilege by virtue.—"Ill," said he,
"The end of man's existence I discerned,
Who from ignoble games and revelry

Could draw, when we had parted, vain delight,
While tears were thy best pastime, day and night,

"And while my youthful peers, before my eyes,
(Each hero following his peculiar bent)
Prepared themselves for glorious enterprise
By martial sports,—or, seated in the tent,
Chieftains and kings in council were detained,
What time the fleet at Aulis lay enchained.

"The wished-for wind was given:—I then resolved
The oracle, upon the silent sea;
And, if no worthier led the way, resolved
That, of a thousand vessels, mine should be
The foremost prow in pressing to the strand,—
Mine the first blood that tinged the Trojan sand.

"Yet bitter, oft-times bitter, was the pang
When of thy loss I thought, belovèd Wife;
On thee too fondly did my memory hang,
And on the joys we shared in mortal life,—
The paths which we had trod—these fountains, flowers;
My new-planned cities, and unfinished towers.

"But should suspense permit the Foe to cry,
'Behold, they tremble!—haughty their array,
Yet of their number no one dares to die'?
In soul I swept the indignity away:
Old frailties then recurred:—but lofty thought,
In act embodied, my deliverance wrought.

"And Thou, though strong in love, art all too weak
In reason, in self-government too slow;
I counsel thee by fortitude to seek
Our blest reunion in the shades below.
The invisible world with thee hath sympathised;
Be thy affections raised and solemnised.

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THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARIN

PART I

It is an ancient Mariner,
And he stoppeth one of three.
"By thy long grey beard and glittering eye
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?

"The Bridegroom's doors are opened wide
And I am next of kin;
The guests are met, the feast is set:
May'st hear the merry din."

He holds him with his skinny hand,
"There was a ship," quoth he.
"Hold off! unhand me, greybeard loon!"
Eftsoons his hand dropt he.

[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
The Mariner hath his will.

The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone:
He cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.

"The ship was cheered, the harbour cleared,
Merrily did we drop
Below the kirk, below the hill,
Below the lighthouse top.

"The Sun came up upon the left,
Out of the sea came he!
And he shone bright, and on the right
Went down into the sea.

"Higher and higher every day,
Till over the mast at noon——"
The Wedding-Guest here beat his breast,
For he heard the loud bassoon.

The Bride hath paced into the hall,
Red as a rose is she;
Nodding their heads before her goes
The merry minstrelsy.

The Wedding-Guest he beat his breast,
Yet he cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.

"And now the Storm-blast came, and he
Was tyrannous and strong:
He struck with his o'ertaking wings,
And chased us south along.

"With sloping masts and dipping prow,
As who pursued with yell and blow
Still treads the shadow of his foe
And forward bends his head,
The ship drove fast, loud roared the blast,
And southward aye we fled.

"And now there came both mist and snow
And it grew wondrous cold:
And ice, mast-high, came floating by,
As green as emerald.

"And through the drifts the snowy clifts
Did send a dismal sheen:
Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken—
The ice was all between.

"The ice was here, the ice was there,
The ice was all around:
It cracked and growled, and roared and how
Like noises in a swound!

"At length did cross an Albatross:
Thorough the fog it came;
As if it had been a Christian soul,
We hailed it in God's name.

"It ate the food it ne'er had eat,
And round and round it flew.
The ice did split with a thunder-fit;
The helmsman steered us through!

"And a good sound wind sprung up behind
The Albatross did follow,
And every day, for food or play,
Came to the mariner's hollo!

"In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud,
It perched for vespers nine;
Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke white,
Glimmered the white moonshine."

"God save thee, ancient Mariner!
From the fiends, that plague thee thus!—
Why look'st thou so?"—With my crossbow
I shot the Albatross.

PART II

The Sun now rose upon the right:
Out of the sea came he,
Still hid in mist, and on the left
Went down into the sea.

And the good south wind still blew behind,
But no sweet bird did follow,
Nor any day for food or play
Came to the mariner's hollo!

And I had done an hellish thing,
And it would work 'em woe:
For all averred, I had killed the bird
That made the breeze to blow.
Ah, wretch! said they, the bird to slay,
That made the breeze to blow!

Nor dim nor red, like God's own head,
The glorious Sun uprist:
Then all averred, I had killed the bird
That brought the fog and mist.
'Twas right, said they, such birds to slay,
That bring the fog and mist.

The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free;
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.

Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,
'Twas sad as sad could be;
And we did speak only to break
The silence of the sea!

All in a hot and copper sky,
The bloody Sun, at noon,
Right up above the mast did stand,
No bigger than the Moon.

Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath nor motion;
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.

Water, water, everywhere,
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water, everywhere,
Nor any drop to drink.

The very deep did rot: O Christ!
That ever this should be!
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
Upon the slimy sea.

About, about, in reel and rout
The death-fires danced at night;
The water, like a witch's oils,
Burnt green, and blue and white.

And some in dreams assurèd were
Of the spirit that plagued us so,
Nine fathom deep he had followed us
From the land of mist and snow.

And every tongue, through utter drought,
Was withered at the root;
We could not speak, no more than if
We had been choked with soot.

Ah! well-a-day! what evil looks
Had I from old and young!
Instead of the cross, the Albatross
About my neck was hung.

PART III

There passed a weary time. Each throat
Was parched, and glazed each eye.
A weary time! a weary time!
How glazed each weary eye,
When looking westward, I beheld
A something in the sky.

At first it seemed a little speck,
And then it seemed a mist;
It moved and moved, and took at last
A certain shape, I wist.

A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist!
And still it neared and neared:
As if it dodged a water-sprite,
It plunged and tacked and veered.

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
We could not laugh nor wail;
Through utter drought all dumb we stood!
I bit my arm, I sucked the blood,
And cried, A sail! a sail!

With throats unslaked, with black lips bak
Agape they heard me call:
Gramercy! they for joy did grin,
And all at once their breath drew in,
As they were drinking all.

See! See! (I cried) she tacks no more!
Hither to work us weal,
Without a breeze, without a tide,
She steadies with upright keel!

The western wave was all a-flame.
The day was wellnigh done!
Almost upon the western wave
Rested the broad bright Sun;
When that strange shape drove suddenly
Betwixt us and the Sun.

And straight the Sun was flecked with bars,
(Heaven's mother send us grace!)
As if through a dungeon-grate he peered
With broad and burning face.

Alas! (thought I, and my heart beat loud)
How fast she nears and nears!
Are those her sails that glance in the Sun,
Like restless gossameres?

[illegible] the Sun,
[illegible]

Is that a Death? and are there two?
Is Death that woman's mate?

Her lips were red, her looks were free,
Her locks were yellow as gold:
Her skin was as white as leprosy,
The Nightmare Life-in-Death was she,
Who thicks man's blood with cold.

The naked hulk alongside came,
And the twain were casting dice;
"The game is done! I've won, I've won!"
Quoth she, and whistles thrice.

The Sun's rim dips; the stars rush out:
At one stride comes the dark;
With far-heard whisper, o'er the sea,
Off shot the spectre-bark.

We listened and looked sideways up!
Fear at my heart, as at a cup,
My life-blood seemed to sip!
The stars were dim, and thick the night,
The steersman's face by his lamp gleamed white;
From the sails the dew did drip—
Till clomb above the eastern bar
The hornèd Moon, with one bright star
Within the nether tip

One after one, by the star-dogged Moon,
Too quick for groan or sigh,
Each turned his face with a ghastly pang,
And cursed me with his eye.

Four times fifty living men,
(And I heard nor sigh nor groan)
With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,
They dropped down one by one.

The souls did from their bodies fly,—
They fled to bliss or woe!
And every soul, it passed me by,
Like the whizz of my cross-bow!

PART IV

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner!
I fear thy skinny hand!
And thou art long, and lank, and brown,
As is the ribbed sea-sand.

"I fear thee and thy glittering eye,
And thy skinny hand, so brown."—
Fear not, fear not, thou Wedding-Guest!
This body dropt not down.

Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide wide sea!
And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony.

The many men, so beautiful!
And they all dead did lie:
And a thousand thousand slimy things
Lived on; and so did I.

I looked upon the rotting sea,
And drew my eyes away;
I looked upon the rotting deck,
And there the dead men lay.

I looked to heaven, and tried to pray;
But or ever a prayer had gusht,
A wicked whisper came, and made
My heart as dry as dust.

I closed my lids, and kept them close,
And the balls like pulses beat;
For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky
Lay like a load on my weary eye,
And the dead were at my feet.

The cold sweat melted from their limbs,
Nor rot nor reek did they;
The look with which they looked on me
Had never passed away.

An orphan's curse would drag to hell
A spirit from on high;
But oh! more horrible than that
Is a curse in a dead man's eye!
Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse,
And yet I could not die.

The moving Moon went up the sky,
And nowhere did abide:
Softly she was going up,
And a star or two beside—

Her beams bemocked the sultry main,
Like April hoar-frost spread;
But where the ship's huge shadow lay,
The charmèd water burnt alway
A still and awful red.

Beyond the shadow of the ship
I watched the water-snakes.
They moved in tracks of shining white,
And when they reared, the elfish light
Fell off in hoary flakes.

Within the shadow of the ship
I watched their rich attire:
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
They coiled and swam; and every track
Was a flash of golden fire.

O happy living things! no tongue
Their beauty might declare:
A spring of love gushed from my heart
And I blessed them unaware:
Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
And I blessed them unaware.

The selfsame moment I could pray;
And from my neck so free
The Albatross fell off, and sank
Like lead into the sea.

PART V

Oh, sleep! it is a gentle thing,
Beloved from pole to pole!
To Mary Queen the praise be given!
She sent the gentle sleep from Heaven,
That slid into my soul.

The silly buckets on the deck,
That had so long remained,
I dreamt that they were filled with dew
And when I awoke, it rained.

My lips were wet, my throat was cold,
My garments all were dank;
Sure I had drunken in my dreams,
And still my body drank.

I moved, and could not feel my limbs:
I was so light—almost
I thought that I had died in sleep,
And was a blessed ghost.

And soon I heard a roaring wind:
It did not come anear;
But with its sound it shook the sails,
That were so thin and sere.

The upper air burst into life!
And a hundred fire-flags sheen,
To and fro they were hurried about!
And to and fro, and in and out,
The wan stars danced between.

And the coming wind did roar more loud,
And the sails did sigh like sedge;
And the rain poured down from one black cloud;
The Moon was at its edge.

The thick black cloud was cleft, and still
The Moon was at its side:
Like waters shot from some high crag,
The lightning fell with never a jag,
A river steep and wide.

The loud wind never reached the ship,
Yet now the ship moved on!
Beneath the lightning and the Moon
The dead men gave a groan.

They groaned, they stirred, they all uprose,
Nor spake, nor moved their eyes;
It had been strange, even in a dream,
To have seen those dead men rise.

The helmsman steered, the ship moved on;
Yet never a breeze up blew;
The mariners all 'gan work the ropes,
Where they were wont to do;
They raised their limbs like lifeless tools—
We were a ghastly crew.

Till noon we quietly sailed on,
Yet never a breeze did breathe:
Slowly and smoothly went the ship,
Moved onward from beneath.

Under the keel nine fathom deep,
From the land of mist and snow,
The spirit slid: and it was he
That made the ship to go.
The sails at noon left off their tune,
And the ship stood still also.

The Sun, right up above the mast,
Had fixed her to the ocean:
But in a minute she 'gan stir,
With a short uneasy motion—
Backwards and forwards half her length
With a short uneasy motion.

Then, like a pawing horse let go,
She made a sudden bound:
It flung the blood into my head,
And I fell down in a swound.

How long in that same fit I lay,
I have not to declare;
But ere my living life returned,
I heard and in my soul discerned
Two voices in the air.

"Is it he?" quoth one, "Is this the man?
By him who died on cross,
With his cruel bow he laid full low
The harmless Albatross.

"The Spirit who bideth by himself
In the land of mist and snow,
He loved the bird that loved the man
Who shot him with his bow."

The other was a softer voice,
As soft as honeydew:
Quoth he, "The man hath penance done,
And penance more will do."

PART VI

First Voice

"But tell me, tell me! speak again,
Thy soft response renewing—
What makes that ship drive on so fast?
What is the Ocean doing?"

Second Voice

"Still as a slave before his lord,
The Ocean hath no blast;
His great bright eye most silently
Up to the Moon is cast—

"If he may know which way to go;
For she guides him smooth or grim.
See, brother, see! how graciously
She looketh down on him."

First Voice

"But why drives on that ship so fast,
Without or wave or wind?"

Second Voice

"The air is cut away before,
And closes from behind.

"Fly, brother, fly! more high, more high!
Or we shall be belated:
For slow and slow that ship will go,
When the Mariner's trance is abated."

I woke, and we were sailing on
As in a gentle weather:
'Twas night, calm night, the Moon was high;
The dead men stood together.

All stood together on the deck,
For a charnel-dungeon fitter:
All fixed on me their stony eyes,
That in the Moon did glitter.

The pang, the curse, with which they died,
Had never passed away:
I could not draw my eyes from theirs,
Nor turn them up to pray.

And now this spell was snapt: once more
I viewed the ocean green,
And looked far forth, yet little saw
Of what had else been seen—

Like one, that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turned round walks on,
And turns no more his head;
Because he knows, a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread.

But soon there breathed a wind on me,
Nor sound nor motion made:
Its path was not upon the sea,
In ripple or in shade.

It raised my hair, it fanned my cheek
Like a meadow-gale of spring—

The skiff-boat neared: I heard them talk,
"Why, this is strange, I trow!
Where are those lights so many and fair,
That signal made but now?"

"Strange, by my faith!" the Hermit said—
"And they answered not our cheer!
The planks look warped! and see those sails,
How thin they are and sere!
I never saw aught like to them,
Unless perchance it were

Brown skeletons of leaves that lag
My forest-brook along;
When the ivy-tod is heavy with snow,
And the owlet whoops to the wolf below,
That eats the she-wolf's young."

"Dear Lord! it hath a fiendish look—"
(The Pilot made reply)
"I am a-feared."—"Push on, push on!"
Said the Hermit cheerily.

The boat came closer to the ship,
But I nor spake nor stirred;
The boat came close beneath the ship,
And straight a sound was heard.

Under the water it rumbled on,
Still louder and more dread:
It reached the ship, it split the bay;
The ship went down like lead.

Stunned by that loud and dreadful sound,
Which sky and ocean smote,
Like one that hath been seven days drowned
My body lay afloat;
But swift as dreams, myself I found
Within the Pilot's boat.

Upon the whirl, where sank the ship,
The boat spun round and round;
And all was still, save that the hill
Was telling of the sound.

I moved my lips—the Pilot shrieked
And fell down in a fit;
The holy Hermit raised his eyes,
And prayed where he did sit.

I took the oars: the Pilot's boy,
Who now doth crazy go,
Laughed loud and long, and all the while
His eyes went to and fro.
"Ha! ha!" quoth he, "full plain I see,
The Devil knows how to row."

And now, all in my own countree,
I stood on the firm land!
The Hermit stepped forth from the boat,
And scarcely he could stand.

"O, shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man!"
The Hermit crossed his brow.
"Say quick," quoth he, "I bid thee say—
What manner of man art thou?"

Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched
With a woeful agony,
Which forced me to begin my tale;
And then it left me free.

Since then, at an uncertain hour,
That agony returns:
And till my ghastly tale is told,
This heart within me burns.

I pass, like night, from land to land;
I have strange power of speech;
That moment that his face I see,
I know the man that must hear me:
To him my tale I teach.

What loud uproar bursts from that door!
The wedding-guests are there:
But in the garden-bower the Bride
The Bride-maids singing are:
And hark the little vesper bell,
Which biddeth me to prayer!

O Wedding-Guest! this soul hath been
Alone on a wide wide sea:
So lonely 'twas, that God Himself
Scarce seemèd there to be.

O, sweeter than the marriage-feast,
'Tis sweeter far to me,
To walk together to the kirk
With a goodly company!—

To walk together to the kirk,
all toge[illegible] pray,
each [illegible] great Father bends,
[illegible] loving friends,
gay!

tell

The Mariner, whose eye is bright,
Whose beard with age is hoar,
Is gone: and now the Wedding-Guest
Turned from the Bridegroom's door.

He went like one that hath been stunned,
And is of sense forlorn:
A sadder and a wiser man,
He rose the morrow morn.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

I

My hair is grey, but not with years,
Nor grew it white
In a single night,
As men's have grown from sudden fears;
[illegible]
[illegible]
For they have been a dungeon's spoil,
And mine has been the fate of those
To whom the goodly earth and air
Are bann'd, and barr'd—forbidden fare;
But this was for my father's faith
I suffer'd chains and courted death;
That father perish'd at the stake
For tenets he would not forsake;
And for the same his lineal race
In darkness found a dwelling-place;
We were seven—who now are one,
Six in youth, and one in age,
Finish'd as they had begun,
Proud of Persecution's rage;
One in fire, and two in field,
Their belief with blood have seal'd,

Dying as their father died,
For the God their foes denied;
Three were in a dungeon cast,
Of whom this wreck is left the last.

II

There are seven pillars of Gothic mould
In Chillon's dungeons deep and old,
There are seven columns, massy and grey,
Dim with a dull imprison'd ray,
A sunbeam which hath lost its way,
And through the crevice and the cleft
Of the thick wall is fallen and left;
Creeping o'er the floor so damp,
Like a marsh's meteor lamp:
And in each pillar there is a ring,
  And in each ring there is a chain;
That iron is a cankering thing,
  For in these limbs its teeth remain,
With marks that will not wear away,
Till I have done with this new day,
Which now is painful to these eyes,
Which have not seen the sun so rise
For years—I cannot count them o'er,
I lost their long and heavy score
When my last brother droop'd and died,
And I lay living by his side.

III

They chain'd us each to a column stone,
And we were three—yet, each alone;
We could not move a single pace,
We could not see each other's face,
But with that pale and livid light
That made us strangers in our sight:

And thus together—yet apart,
Fetter'd in hand, but join'd in heart,
'Twas still some solace, in the dearth
Of the pure elements of earth,
To hearken to each other's speech,
And each turn comforter to each
With some new hope, or legend old,
Or song heroically bold;
But even these at length grew cold.
Our voices took a dreary tone,
An echo of the dungeon stone,
  A grating sound, not full and free,
  As they of yore were wont to be:
  It might be fancy, but to me
They never sounded like our own.

IV

I was the eldest of the three,
  And to uphold and cheer the rest
  I ought to do—and did my best—
And each did well in his degree.
  The youngest, whom my father loved,
Because our mother's brow was given
To him, with eyes as blue as heaven—
  For him my soul was sorely moved;
And truly might it be distress'd
To see such bird in such a nest;
For he was beautiful as day—
  (When day was beautiful to me
  As to young eagles, being free)—
  A polar day, which will not see
A sunset till its summer's gone,
  Its sleepless summer of long light,
The snow-clad offspring of the sun:
  And thus he was as pure and bright,
And in his natural spirit gay,

With tears for nought but others' ills,
And then they flow'd like mountain rills,
Unless he could assuage the woe
Which he abhorr'd to view below.

V

The other was as pure of mind,
But form'd to combat with his kind;
Strong in his frame, and of a mood
Which 'gainst the world in war had stood,
And perish'd in the foremost rank
With joy:—but not in chains to pine:
His spirit wither'd with their clank,
I saw it silently decline—
And so perchance in sooth did mine:
But yet I forced it on to cheer
Those relics of a home so dear.
He was a hunter of the hills,
Had follow'd there the deer and wolf;
To him his dungeon was a gulf,
And fetter'd feet the worst of ills.

VI

Lake Leman lies by Chillon's walls:
A thousand feet in depth below
Its massy waters meet and flow;
Thus much the fathom-line was sent
From Chillon's snow-white battlement,
Which round about the wave inthrals:
A double dungeon wall and wave
Have made—and like a living grave
Below the surface of the lake
The dark vault lies wherein we lay,
We heard it ripple night and day;
Sounding o'er our heads it knock'd;
And I have felt the winter's spray

Wash through the bars when winds were high
And wanton in the happy sky;
  And then the very rock hath rock'd,
  And I have felt it shake, unshock'd,
Because I could have smiled to see
The death that would have set me free.

VII

I said my nearer brother pined,
I said his mighty heart declined,
He loathed and put away his food;
It was not that 'twas coarse and rude,
For we were used to hunter's fare,
And for the like had little care:
The milk drawn from the mountain goat
Was changed for water from the moat,
Our bread was such as captives' tears
Have moisten'd many a thousand years
Since man first pent his fellow men
Like brutes within an iron den;
But what were these to us or him?
These wasted not his heart or limb;
My brother's soul was of that mould
Which in a palace had grown cold,
Had his free breathing been denied
The range of the steep mountain's side;
But why delay the truth?—he died.
I saw, and could not hold his head,
Nor reach his dying hand—nor dead,—
Though hard I strove, but strove in vain,
To rend and gnash my bonds in twain.
He died, and they unlock'd his chain,
And scoop'd for him a shallow grave
Even from the cold earth of our cave,
I begg'd them as a boon to lay
His corse in dust whereon the day

Might shine—it was a foolish thought,
But then within my brain it wrought,
That even in death his freeborn breast
In such a dungeon could not rest.
I might have spared my idle prayer—
They coldly laugh'd, and laid him there:
The flat and turfless earth above
The being we so much did love;
His empty chain above it leant,
Such murder's fitting monument!

VIII

But he, the favourite and the flower,
Most cherish'd since his natal hour,
His mother's image in fair face,
The infant love of all his race,
His martyr'd father's dearest thought,
My latest care, for whom I sought
To hoard my life, that his might be
Less wretched now, and one day free;
He, too, who yet had held untired
A spirit natural or inspired—
He, too, was struck, and day by day
Was wither'd on the stalk away.
Oh, God! it is a fearful thing
To see the human soul take wing
In any shape, in any mood:
I've seen it rushing forth in blood,
I've seen it on the breaking ocean
Strive with a swoln convulsive motion,
I've seen the sick and ghastly bed
Of Sin delirious with its dread;
But these were horrors—this was woe
Unmix'd with such—but sure and slow:
He faded, and so calm and meek,
So softly worn, so sweetly weak,

So tearless, yet so tender, kind,
And grieved for those he left behind;
With all the while a cheek whose bloom
Was as a mockery of the tomb,
Whose tints as gently sunk away
As a departing rainbow's ray;
An eye of most transparent light,
That almost made the dungeon bright,
And not a word of murmur, not
A groan o'er his untimely lot,—
A little talk of better days,
A little hope my own to raise,
For I was sunk in silence—lost
In this last loss, of all the most;

I call'd, for I was wild with fear;
I knew 'twas hopeless, but my dread
Would not be thus admonished;
I call'd, and thought I heard a sound—
I burst my chain with one strong bound,
And rush'd to him:—I found him not,
I only stirr'd in this black spot,
I only lived, *I* only drew
The accursed breath of dungeon-dew;
The last, the sole, the dearest link
Between me and the eternal brink,
Which bound me to my failing race,
Was broken in this fatal place.
One on the earth, and one beneath—
My brothers—both had ceased to breathe:
I took that hand which lay so still,
Alas! my own was full as chill;
I had not strength to stir, or strive,
But felt that I was still alive—

Might shine—it was a foolish thought,
But then within my brain it wrought,
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And not a word of murmur, not
A groan o'er his untimely lot,—
A little talk of better days,
A little hope my own to raise,
For I was sunk in silence—lost
In this last loss, of all the most;
And then the sighs he would suppress
Of fainting nature's feebleness,
More slowly drawn, grew less and less:
I listen'd, but I could not hear;
I call'd, for I was wild with fear;
I knew 'twas hopeless, but my dread
Would *not* be *thus admonished*;
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
I only stirr'd in this black spot,
I only lived, *I* only drew
The accursed breath of dungeon-dew;
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Between me and the eternal brink,
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Was broken in this fatal place.
One on the earth, and one beneath—
My brothers—both had ceased to breathe:
I took that hand which lay so still,
Alas! my own was full as chill;
I had not strength to stir, or strive,
But felt that I was still alive—

A frantic feeling, when we know
That what we love shall ne'er be so.
I know not why
I could not die,
I had no earthly hope but faith,
And that forbade a selfish death.

IX

What next befell me then and there
I know not well—I never knew—
First came the loss of light, and air,
And then of darkness too:
I had no thought, no feeling—none—
Among the stones I stood a stone,
And was, scarce conscious what I wist,
As shrubless crags within the mist;
For all was blank, and bleak, and grey;
It was not night, it was not day;
It was not even the dungeon-light,
So hateful to my heavy sight,
But vacancy absorbing space,
And fixedness without a place;
There were no stars, no earth, no time,
No check, no change, no good, no crime,
But silence, and a stirless breath
Which neither was of life nor death;
A sea of stagnant idleness,
Blind, boundless, mute, and motionless!

X

A light broke in upon my brain,—
It was the carol of a bird;
It ceased, and then it came again,
The sweetest song ear ever heard,
And mine was thankful till my eyes
Ran over with the glad surprise,

And they that moment could not see
I was the mate of misery;
But then by dull degrees came back
My senses to their wonted track;
I saw the dungeon walls and floor
Close slowly round me as before,
I saw the glimmer of the sun
Creeping as it before had done,
But through the crevice where it came
That bird was perch'd, as fond and tame,
[illegible]

It seem'd like me to want a mate,
But was not half so desolate,
And it was come to love me when
None lived to love me so again,
And cheering from my dungeon's brink,
Had brought me back to feel and think.
I know not if it late were free,
  Or broke its cage to perch on mine,
But knowing well captivity,
  Sweet bird! I could not wish for thine!
Or if it were, in wingèd guise,
A visitant from Paradise;
For—Heaven forgive that thought! the while
Which made me both to weep and smile—
I sometimes deem'd that it might be
My brother's soul come down to me;
But then at last away it flew,
And then 'twas mortal well I knew,
For he would never thus have flown,
And left me twice so doubly lone,
Lone as the corse within its shroud,

Lone as a solitary cloud,—
  A single cloud on a sunny day,
While all the rest of heaven is clear,
A frown upon the atmosphere,
That hath no business to appear
  When skies are blue, and earth is gay.

XI

A kind of change came in my fate,
My keepers grew compassionate;
I know not what had made them so,
They were inured to sights of woe,
But so it was:—my broken chain
With links unfasten'd did remain,
And it was liberty to stride
Along my cell from side to side,
And up and down, and then athwart,
And tread it over every part;
And round the pillars one by one,
Returning where my walk begun,
Avoiding only, as I trod,
My brothers' graves without a sod;
For if I thought with heedless tread
My step profaned their lowly bed,
My breath came gaspingly and thick,
And my crush'd heart fell blind and sick.

XII

I made a footing in the wall,
  It was not therefrom to escape,
For I had buried one and all
  Who loved me in a human shape;
And the whole earth would henceforth be
A wider prison unto me:
No child, no sire, no kin had I,
No partner in my misery;

I thought of this, and I was glad,
For thought of them had made me mad;
But I was curious to ascend
To my barr'd windows, and to bend
Once more, upon the mountains high,
The quiet of a loving eye.

XIII

I saw them, and they were the same,
They were not changed like me in frame;
I saw their thousand years of snow
On high—their wide long lake below,
[illegible]

The only one in view;
A small green isle, it seem'd no more,
Scarce broader than my dungeon floor,
But in it there were three tall trees,
And o'er it blew the mountain breeze,
And by it there were waters flowing,
And on it there were young flowers growing,
Of gentle breath and hue.
The fish swam by the castle wall,
And they seem'd joyous each and all;
The eagle rode the rising blast,
Methought he never flew so fast
As then to me he seem'd to fly;
And then new tears came in my eye,
And I felt troubled—and would fain
I had not left my recent chain;
And when I did descend again,

The darkness of my dim abode
Fell on me as a heavy load;
It was as is a new-dug grave,
Closing o'er one we sought to save,—
And yet my glance, too much opprest,
Had almost need of such a rest.

XIV

It might be months, or years, or days,
  I kept no count, I took no note,
I had no hope my eyes to raise,
  And clear them of their dreary mote;
At last men came to set me free;
  I ask'd not why, and reck'd not where;
It was at length the same to me,
Fetter'd or fetterless to be,
  I learn'd to love despair.
And thus when they appear'd at last,
And all my bonds aside were cast,
These heavy walls to me had grown
A hermitage—and all my own!
And half I felt as they were come
To tear me from a second home:
With spiders I had friendship made,
And watch'd them in their sullen trade,
Had seen the mice by moonlight play,
And why should I feel less than they?
We were all inmates of one place,
And I, the monarch of each race,
Had power to kill—yet, strange to tell!
In quiet we had learn'd to dwell;
My very chains and I grew friends,
So much a long communion tends
To make us what we are:—even I
Regain'd my freedom with a sigh.

LORD BYRON

ADONAIS

I

I weep for Adonais—he is dead!
O, weep for Adonais! though our tears
Thaw not the frost which binds so dear a head!
And thou, sad Hour, selected from all years
To mourn our loss, rouse thy obscure compeers,
And teach them thine own sorrow, say: "With me
Died Adonais; till the Future dares
Forget the Past, his fate and fame shall be
An echo and a light unto eternity!"

II

Where wert thou, mighty Mother, when he lay,
When thy Son lay, pierced by the shaft which flies
In darkness? where was lorn Urania
When Adonais died? With veilèd eyes,
'Mid listening Echoes, in her Paradise
She sate, while one, with soft enamoured breath,
Rekindled all the fading melodies,
With which, like flowers that mock the corse beneath,
He had adorned and hid the coming bulk of Death.

III

Oh, weep for Adonais—he is dead!
Wake, melancholy Mother, wake and weep!
Yet wherefore? Quench within their burning bed
Thy fiery tears, and let thy loud heart keep
Like his, a mute and uncomplaining sleep;
For he is gone, where all things wise and fair
Descend;—oh, dream not that the amorous Deep
Will yet restore him to the vital air;
Death feeds on his mute voice, and laughs at our despair.

IV

Most musical of mourners, weep again!
Lament anew, Urania!—He died,
Who was the Sire of an immortal strain,
Blind, old, and lonely, when his country's pride,
The priest, the slave, and the liberticide,
Trampled and mocked with many a loathèd rite
Of lust and blood; he went, unterrified,
Into the gulf of death; but his clear Sprite
Yet reigns o'er earth; the third among the sons of light.

V

Most musical of mourners, weep anew!
Not all to that bright station dared to climb;
And happier they their happiness who knew,
Whose tapers yet burn through that night of time
In which suns perished; others more sublime,
Struck by the envious wrath of man or god,
Have sunk, extinct in their refulgent prime;
And some yet live, treading the thorny road,
Which leads, through toil and hate, to Fame's serene abode.

VI

But now, thy youngest, dearest one, has perished—
The nursling of thy widowhood, who grew,
Like a pale flower by some sad maiden cherished,
And fed with true-love tears, instead of dew;
Most musical of mourners, weep anew!
Thy extreme hope, the loveliest and the last,
The bloom, whose petals nipped before they blew
Died on the promise of the fruit, is waste;
Thy broken lily lies—the storm is overpast.

VII

To that high Capital, where kingly Death
Keeps his pale court in beauty and decay,
He came; and bought, with price of purest breath,
A grave among the eternal.—Come away!

Haste, while the vault of blue Italian day
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
Of deep and liquid rest, forgetful of all ill.

VIII

He will awake no more, oh, never more!—
Within the twilight chamber spreads apace
The shadow of white Death, and at the door
Invisible Corruption waits to trace
His extreme way to her dim dwelling-place;
The eternal Hunger sits, but pity and awe
Soothe her pale rage, nor dares she to deface
So fair a prey, till darkness, and the law
Of change, shall o'er his sleep the mortal curtain draw.

IX

Oh, weep for Adonais!—The quick Dreams,
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
Wander no more, from kindling brain to brain,
But droop there, whence they sprung; and mourn their lot
Round the cold heart, where, after their sweet pain,
They ne'er will gather strength, or find a home again.

X

And one with trembling hands clasps his cold head,
And fans him with her moonlight wings, and cries,
"Our love, our hope, our sorrow, is not dead;
See, on the silken fringe of his faint eyes,
Like dew upon a sleeping flower, there lies
A tear some Dream has loosened from his brain."
Lost Angel of a ruined Paradise!
She knew not 'twas her own; as with no stain
She faded, like a cloud which had outwept its rain.

XI

One from a lucid urn of starry dew
Washed his light limbs as if embalming them;
Another clipped her profuse locks, and threw
The wreath upon him, like an anadem,
Which frozen tears instead of pearls begem;
Another in her wilful grief would break
Her bow and wingèd reeds, as if to stem
A greater loss with one which was more weak;
And dull the barbèd fire against his frozen cheek.

XII

Another Splendour on his mouth alit,
That mouth, whence it was wont to draw the breat
Which gave it strength to pierce the guarded wit,
And pass into the panting heart beneath
With lightning and with music: the damp death
Quenched its caress upon his icy lips;
And, as a dying meteor stains a wreath
Of moonlight vapour, which the cold night clips,
It flushed through his pale limbs, and passed to its eclipse.

XIII

And others came . . . Desires and Adorations,
Wingèd Persuasions and veiled Destinies,
Splendours, and Glooms, and glimmering Incarnations
Of hopes and fears, and twilight Phantasies;
And Sorrow, with her family of Sighs,
And Pleasure, blind with tears, led by the gleam
Of her own dying smile instead of eyes,
Came in slow pomp;—the moving pomp might seem
Like pageantry of mist on an autumnal stream.

XIV

All he had loved, and moulded into thought,
From shape, and hue, and odour, and sweet sound,
Lamented Adonais. Morning sought
Her eastern watch-tower, and her hair unbound,

Wet with the tears which should adorn the ground,
Dimmed the aerial eyes that kindle day;
Afar the melancholy thunder moaned,
Pale Ocean in unquiet slumber lay,
And the wild Winds flew round, sobbing in their dismay.

XV

Lost Echo sits amid the voiceless mountains,
And feeds her grief with his remembered lay,
And will no more reply to winds or fountains,
Or amorous birds perched on the young green spray,
Or herdsman's horn, or bell at closing day;
Since she can mimic not his lips, more dear
Than those for whose disdain she pined away
Into a shadow of all sounds:—a drear
Murmur, between their songs, is all the woodmen hear.

XVI

Grief made the young Spring wild, and she threw down
Her kindling buds, as if she Autumn were,
Or they dead leaves; since her delight is flown,
For whom should she have waked the sullen year?
To Phœbus was not Hyacinth so dear
Nor to himself Narcissus, as to both
Thou, Adonais: wan they stand and sere
Amid the faint companions of their youth,
With dew all turned to tears; odour, to sighing ruth.

XVII

[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
Her mighty youth with morning, doth complain,
Soaring and screaming round her empty nest,
As Albion wails for thee: the curse of Cain
Light on his head who pierced thy innocent breast,
And scared the angel soul that was its earthly guest!

XVIII

Ah, woe is me! Winter is come and gone,
But grief returns with the revolving year;
The airs and streams renew their joyous tone;
The ants, the bees, the swallows reappear;
Fresh leaves and flowers deck the dead Seasons' bier;
The amorous birds now pair in every brake,
And build their mossy homes in field and brere;
And the green lizard, and the golden snake,
Like unimprisoned flames, out of their trance awake.

XIX

Through wood and stream and field and hill and Ocean
A quickening life from the Earth's heart has burst
As it has ever done, with change and motion,
From the great morning of the world when first
God dawned on Chaos; in its stream immersed,
The lamps of Heaven flash with a softer light;
All baser things pant with life's sacred thirst;
Diffuse themselves; and spend in love's delight,
The beauty and the joy of their renewèd might.

XX

The leprous corpse, touched by this spirit tender,
Exhales itself in flowers of gentle breath;
Like incarnations of the stars, when splendour
Is changed to fragrance, they illumine death
And mock the merry worm that wakes beneath;
Nought we know, dies. Shall that alone which knows
Be as a sword consumed before the sheath
By sightless lightning?—the intense atom glows
A moment, then is quenched in a most cold repose.

XXI

Alas! that all we loved of him should be,
But for our grief, as if it had not been,
And grief itself be mortal! Woe is me!
Whence are we, and why are we? of what scene

The actors or spectators? Great and mean
Meet massed in death, who lends what life must borrow.
As long as skies are blue, and fields are green,
Evening must usher night, night urge the morrow,
Month follow month with woe, and year wake year to sorrow.

XXII

He will awake no more, oh, never more!
"Wake thou," cried Misery, "childless Mother, rise
Out of thy sleep, and slake, in thy heart's core,
A wound more fierce than his, with tears and sighs."
And all the Dreams that watched Urania's eyes,
And all the Echoes whom their sister's song
Had held in holy silence, cried: "Arise!"
Swift as a Thought by the snake Memory stung,
From her ambrosial rest the fading Splendour sprung.

XXIII

She rose like an autumnal Night, that springs
Out of the East, and follows wild and drear
The golden Day, which, on eternal wings,
Even as a ghost abandoning a bier,
Had left the Earth a corpse. Sorrow and fear
So struck, so roused, so rapt Urania;
So saddened round her like an atmosphere
Of stormy mist; so swept her on her way
Even to the mournful place where Adonais lay.

XXIV

Out of her secret Paradise she sped,
Through camps and cities rough with stone, and steel,
And human hearts, which to her aery tread
Yielding not, wounded the invisible
Palms of her tender feet where'er they fell:
And barbèd tongues, and thoughts more sharp than they,
Rent the soft Form they never could repel,
Whose sacred blood, like the young tears of May,
Paved with eternal flowers that undeserving way.

And whose wings rain contagion;—how they fled,
When, like Apollo, from his golden bow
The Pythian of the age one arrow sped
And smiled!—The spoilers tempt no second blow,
They fawn on the proud feet that spurn them lying low.

XXIX

"The sun comes forth, and many reptiles spawn;
He sets, and each ephemeral insect then
Is gathered into death without a dawn,
And the immortal stars awake again;
So is it in the world of living men:
A godlike mind soars forth, in its delight
Making earth bare and veiling heaven, and when
It sinks, the swarms that dimmed or shared its light
Leave to its kindred lamps the spirit's awful night."

XXX

Thus ceased she: and the mountain shepherds came,
Their garlands sere, their magic mantles rent;
The Pilgrim of Eternity, whose fame
Over his living head like Heaven is bent,
An early but enduring monument,
Came, veiling all the lightnings of his song
In sorrow; from her wilds Ierne sent
The sweetest lyrist of her saddest wrong,
And Love taught Grief to fall like music from his tongue.

XXXI

Midst others of less note, came one frail Form,
A phantom among men; companionless
As the last cloud of an expiring storm
Whose thunder is its knell; he, as I guess,
Had gazed on Nature's naked loveliness,
Actaeon-like, and now he fled astray
With feeble steps o'er the world's wilderness,
And his own thoughts, along that rugged way,
Pursued, like raging hounds, their father and their prey.

XXXII

A pardlike Spirit beautiful and swift—
A Love in desolation masked;—a Power
Girt round with weakness;—it can scarce uplift
The weight of the superincumbent hour;
It is a dying lamp, a falling shower,
A breaking billow;—even whilst we speak
Is it not broken? On the withering flower
The killing sun smiles brightly: on a cheek
The life can burn in blood, even while the heart may break.

XXXIII

His head was bound with pansies overblown,
And faded violets, white, and pied, and blue;
And a light spear topped with a cypress cone,
Round whose rude shaft dark ivy-tresses grew
Yet dripping with the forest's noonday dew,
Vibrated, as the ever-beating heart
Shook the weak hand that grasped it; of that crew
He came the last, neglected and apart;
A herd-abandoned deer struck by the hunter's dart.

XXXIV

All stood aloof, and at his partial moan
Smiled through their tears; well knew that gentle band
Who in another's fate now wept his own,
As in the accents of an unknown land
He sung new sorrow; sad Urania scanned
The Stranger's mien, and murmured: "Who art thou?"
He answered not, but with a sudden hand
Made bare his branded and ensanguined brow,
Which was like Cain's or Christ's—oh! that it should be so!

XXXV

What softer voice is hushed over the dead?
Athwart what brow is that dark mantle thrown?
What form leans sadly o'er the white death-bed,
In mockery of monumental stone,

The heavy heart heaving without a moan?
If it be He, who, gentlest of the wise,
Taught, soothed, loved, honoured the departed one,
Let me not vex, with inharmonious sighs,
The silence of that heart's accepted sacrifice.

XXXVI

Our Adonais has drunk poison—oh!
What deaf and viperous murderer could crown
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
Whose prelude held all envy, hate, and wrong,
But what was howling in one breast alone,
Silent with expectation of the song,
Whose master's hand is cold, whose silver lyre unstrung.

XXXVII

Live thou, whose infamy is not thy fame!
Live! fear no heavier chastisement from me,
Thou noteless blot on a remembered name!
But be thyself, and know thyself to be!
And ever at thy season be thou free
To spill the venom when thy fangs o'erflow:
Remorse and Self-contempt shall cling to thee;
Hot Shame shall burn upon thy secret brow,
And like a beaten hound tremble thou shalt—as now.

XXXVIII

Nor let us weep that our delight is fled
Far from these carrion kites that scream below;
He wakes or sleeps with the enduring dead;
Thou canst not soar where he is sitting now.—
Dust to the dust! but the pure spirit shall flow
Back to the burning fountain whence it came,
A portion of the Eternal, which must glow
Through time and change, unquenchably the same,
Whilst thy cold embers choke the sordid hearth of shame.

XXXIX

Peace, peace! he is not dead, he doth not sleep—
He hath awakened from the dream of life—
'Tis we, who lost in stormy visions, keep
With phantoms an unprofitable strife,
And in mad trance, strike with our spirit's knife
Invulnerable nothings.—*We* decay
Like corpses in a charnel; fear and grief
Convulse us and consume us day by day,
And cold hopes swarm like worms within our living clay.

XL

He has outsoared the shadow of our night;
Envy and calumny and hate and pain,
And that unrest which men miscall delight,
Can touch him not and torture not again;
From the contagion of the world's slow stain
He is secure, and now can never mourn
A heart grown cold, a head grown gray in vain;
Nor, when the spirit's self has ceased to burn,
With sparkless ashes load an unlamented urn.

XLI

He lives, he wakes—'tis Death is dead, not he;
Mourn not for Adonais.—Thou young Dawn,
Turn all thy dew to splendour, for from thee
The spirit thou lamentest is not gone;
Ye caverns and ye forests, cease to moan!
Cease, ye faint flowers and fountains, and thou A:-
Which like a mourning veil thy scarf hadst thr
O'er the abandoned Earth, now leave it bare
Even to the joyous stars which smile on its despa

XLII

He is made one with Nature: there is heard
His voice in all her music, from the moan
Of thunder, to the song of night's sweet bird;
He is a presence to be felt and known

In darkness and in light, from herb and stone,
Spreading itself where'er that Power may move
Which has withdrawn his being to its own;
Which wields the world with never-wearied love,
Sustains it from beneath, and kindles it above.

XLIII

He is a portion of the loveliness
Which once he made more lovely: he doth bear
His part, while the one Spirit's plastic stress
Sweeps through the dull dense world, compelling there,
All new successions to the forms they wear;
Torturing th' unwilling dross that checks its flight
To its own likeness, as each mass may bear;
And bursting in its beauty and its might
From trees and beasts and men into the Heaven's light.

XLIV

The splendours of the firmament of time
May be eclipsed, but are extinguished not;
Like stars to their appointed height they climb,
And death is a low mist which cannot blot
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
Shall be its earthly doom, the dead live there
And move like winds of light on dark and stormy air.

XLV

The inheritors of unfulfilled renown
Rose from their thrones, built beyond mortal thought
Far in the Unapparent. Chatterton
Rose pale,—his solemn agony had not
Yet faded from him; Sidney, as he fought
And as he fell and as he lived and loved
Sublimely mild, a Spirit without spot,
Arose; and Lucan, by his death approved:
Oblivion as they rose shrank like a thing reproved.

XLVI

And many more, whose names on Earth are dark
But whose transmitted effluence cannot die
So long as fire outlives the parent spark,
Rose, robed in dazzling immortality.
"Thou art become as one of us," they cry,
"It was for thee yon kingless sphere has long
Swung blind in unascended majesty,
Silent alone amid an Heaven of Song.
Assume thy wingèd throne, thou Vesper of our throng!"

XLVII

Who mourns for Adonais? Oh, come forth,
Fond wretch! and know thyself and him aright.
Clasp with thy panting soul the pendulous Earth;
As from a centre, dart thy spirit's light
Beyond all worlds, until its spacious might
Satiate the void circumference: then shrink
Even to a point within our day and night;
And keep thy heart light lest it make thee sink
When hope has kindled hope, and lured thee to the brink.

XLVIII

Or go to Rome, which is the sepulchre,
Oh, not of him, but of our joy: 'tis nought
That ages, empires, and religions there
Lie buried in the ravage they have wrought;
For such as he can lend,—they borrow not
Glory from those who made the world their prey;
And he is gathered to the kings of thought
Who waged contention with their time's decay,
And of the past are all that cannot pass away.

XLIX

Go thou to Rome,—at once the Paradise,
The grave, the city, and the wilderness;
And where its wrecks like shattered mountains rise,
And flowering weeds, and fragrant copses dress

The bones of Desolation's nakedness,
Pass, till the spirit of the spot shall lead
Thy footsteps to a slope of green access
Where, like an infant's smile, over the dead
A light of laughing flowers along the grass is spread;

L

And gray walls moulder round, on which dull Time
Feeds, like slow fire upon a hoary brand;
[illegible] me,
[illegible]
[illegible]
Like flame transformed to marble; and beneath,
A field is spread, on which a newer band
Have pitched in Heaven's smile their camp of death,
Welcoming him we lose with scarce extinguished breath.

LI

Here pause: these graves are all too young as yet
To have outgrown the sorrow which consigned
Its charge to each; and if the seal is set,
Here, on one fountain of a mourning mind,
Break it not thou! too surely shalt thou find
Thine own well full, if thou returnest home,
Of tears and gall. From the world's bitter wind
Seek shelter in the shadow of the tomb.
What Adonais is, why fear we to become?

LII

The One remains, the many change and pass;
Heaven's light for ever shines, Earth's shadows fly;
Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
Stains the white radiance of Eternity,
[illegible]
[illegible]
Flowers, ruins, statues, music, words, are weak
The glory they transfuse with fitting truth to speak.

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What Adonais is, why fear we to become?

LII

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Heaven's light for ever shines, Earth's shadows fly,
Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
Stains the white radiance of Eternity,
Until Death tramples it to fragments.—Die,
If thou wouldst be with that which thou dost seek!
Follow where all is fled!—Rome's azure sky,

LIII

Why linger, why turn back, why shrink, my Heart?
Thy hopes are gone before: from all things here
They have departed; thou shouldst now depart!
A light is passed from the revolving year,
And man, and woman; and what still is dear
Attracts to crush, repels to make thee wither.
The soft sky smiles,—the low wind whispers near:
'Tis Adonais calls! oh, hasten thither,
No more let Life divide what Death can join together.

LIV

That Light whose smile kindles the Universe,
That Beauty in which all things work and move,
That Benediction which the eclipsing Curse
Of birth can quench not, that sustaining Love
Which through the web of being blindly wove
By man and beast and earth and air and sea,
Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of
The fire for which all thirst; now beams on me,
Consuming the last clouds of cold mortality.

LV

The breath whose might I have invoked in song
Descends on me; my spirit's bark is driven,
Far from the shore, far from the trembling throng
Whose sails were never to the tempest given;
The massy earth and spherèd skies are riven!
I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar;
Whilst, burning through the inmost veil of Heaven,
The soul of Adonais, like a star,
Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

IV

That ancient Beadsman heard the prelude soft;
And so it chanced, for many a door was wide,
From hurry to and fro. Soon, up aloft,
The silver, snarling trumpets 'gan to chide:
The level chambers, ready with their pride,
Were glowing to receive a thousand guests:
The carvèd angels, ever eager-eyed,
Stared, where upon their heads the cornice rests,
With hair blown back, and wings put crosswise on thei

V

At length burst in the argent revelry,
With plume, tiara, and all rich array,
Numerous as shadows haunting faerily
The brain, new stuffed, in youth, with triumphs g
Of old romance. These let us wish away,
And turn, sole-thoughted, to one Lady there,
Whose heart had brooded, all that wintry day,
On love, and winged St Agnes' saintly care,
As she had heard old dames full many times declare

VI

They told her how, upon St Agnes' Eve,
Young virgins might have visions of delight,
And soft adorings from their loves receive
Upon the honeyed middle of the night,
If ceremonies due they did aright;
As, supperless to bed they must retire,
And couch supine their beauties, lily white;
Nor look behind, nor sideways, but require
Of Heaven with upward eyes for all that they desir

VII

Full of this whim was thoughtful Madeline:
The music, yearning like a God in pain,
She scarcely heard: her maiden eyes divine,
Fixed on the floor, saw many a sweeping train

Pass by—she heeded not at all: in vain
Came many a tiptoe, amorous cavalier,
And back retired; not cooled by high disdain,
But she saw not: her heart was otherwhere:
She sighed for Agnes' dreams, the sweetest of the year.

VIII

She danced along with vague, regardless eyes,
Anxious her lips, her breathing quick and short:
The hallowed hour was near at hand: she sighs
[illegible]
Hoodwinked with faery fancy; all amort,
Save to St Agnes and her lambs unshorn,
And all the bliss to be before to-morrow morn.

IX

So, purposing each moment to retire,
She lingered still. Meantime, across the moors,
Had come young Porphyro, with heart on fire
For Madeline. Beside the portal doors,
[illegible]
That he might gaze and worship all unseen;
Perchance speak, kneel, touch, kiss—in sooth such things have been.

X

He ventures in: let no buzzed whisper tell:
All eyes be muffled, or a hundred swords
Will storm his heart, Love's fev'rous citadel:
For him, those chambers held barbarian hordes,
Hyena foemen, and hot-blooded lords,
Whose very dogs would execrations howl
Against his lineage: not one breast affords
Him any mercy, in that mansion foul,
Save one old beldame, weak in body and in soul.

XI

Ah, happy chance! the aged creature came,
Shuffling along with ivory-headed wand,
To where he stood, hid from the torch's flame,
Behind a broad hall-pillar, far beyond
The sound of merriment and chorus bland:
He startled her; but soon she knew his face,
And grasped his fingers in her palsied hand,
Saying, "Mercy, Porphyro! hie thee from this place
They are all here to-night, the whole blood-thirsty rac

XII

"Get hence! get hence! there's dwarfish Hildebran
He had a fever late, and in the fit
He cursed thee and thine, both house and land:
Then there's that old Lord Maurice, not a whit
More tame for his gray hairs—Alas me! flit!
Flit like a ghost away."—"Ah, Gossip dear,
We're safe enough; here in this armchair sit,
And tell me how——" "Good Saints! not here, not
Follow me, child, or else these stones will be thy bier.'

XIII

He followed through a lowly archèd way,
Brushing the cobwebs with his lofty plume,
And as she muttered "Well-a—well-a-day!"
He found him in a little moonlight room,
Pale, latticed, chill, and silent as a tomb.
"Now tell me where is Madeline," said he,
"O, tell me, Angela, by the holy loom
Which none but secret sisterhood may see,
When they St Agnes' wool are weaving piously."

XIV

"St Agnes! Ah! it is St Agnes' Eve—
Yet men will murder upon holy days:
Thou must hold water in a witch's sieve,
And be liege-lord of all the Elves and Fays,

To venture so: it fills me with amaze
To see thee, Porphyro!—St Agnes' Eve!
God's help! my lady fair the conjuror plays
This very night: good angels her deceive!
But let me laugh awhile, I've mickle time to grieve."

XV

Feebly she laugheth in the languid moon,
While Porphyro upon her face doth look,
Like puzzled urchin on an aged crone
Who keepeth closed a wond'rous riddle-book,
As spectacled she sits in chimney nook.
But soon his eyes grew brilliant, when she told
His lady's purpose; and he scarce could brook
Tears, at the thought of those enchantments cold,
And Madeline asleep in lap of legends old.

XVI

Sudden a thought came like a full-blown rose,
Flushing his brow, and in his painèd heart
Made purple riot: then doth he propose
A stratagem, that makes the beldame start:
"A cruel man and impious thou art:
Sweet lady, let her pray, and sleep, and dream
Alone with her good angels, far apart
From wicked men like thee. Go, go!—I deem
Thou canst not surely be the same that thou didst seem."

XVII

"I will not harm her, by all saints I swear,"
Quoth Porphyro: "O, may I ne'er find grace
When my weak voice shall whisper its last prayer,
If one of her soft ringlets I displace,
Or look with ruffian passion in her face:
Good Angela, believe me by these tears;
Or I will, even in a moment's space,
Awake, with horrid shout, my foemen's ears,
And beard them, though they be more fanged than wolves and bears."

XVIII

"Ah! why wilt thou affright a feeble soul?
A poor, weak, palsy-stricken, churchyard thing,
Whose passing-bell may ere the midnight toll;
Whose prayers for thee, each morn and evening,
Were never missed."—Thus plaining, doth she bring
A gentler speech from burning Porphyro;
So woful, and of such deep sorrowing,
That Angela gives promise she will do
Whatever he shall wish, betide her weal or woe.

XIX

Which was, to lead him, in close secrecy,
Even to Madeline's chamber, and there hide
Him in a closet, of such privacy
That he might see her beauty unespied,
And win perhaps that night a peerless bride,
While legioned faeries paced the coverlet,
And pale enchantment held her sleepy-eyed.
Never on such a night have lovers met,
Since Merlin paid his Demon all the monstrous debt.

XX

"It shall be as thou wishest," said the Dame:
"All cates and dainties shall be storèd there
Quickly on this feast-night: by the tambour frame
Her own lute thou wilt see: no time to spare,
For I am slow and feeble, and scarce dare
On such a catèring trust my dizzy head.
Wait here, my child, with patience; kneel in prayer
The while: Ah! thou must needs the lady wed,
Or may I never leave my grave among the dead."

XXI

So saying, she hobbled off with busy fear.
The lover's endless minutes slowly passed;
The dame returned, and whispered in his ear
To follow her; with agèd eyes aghast

From fright of dim espial. Safe at last,
Through many a dusky gallery, they gain
The maiden's chamber, silken, hushed, and chaste;
Where Porphyro took covert, pleased amain.
His poor guide hurried back with agues in her brain.

XXII

Her faltering hand upon the balustrade,
Old Angela was feeling for the stair,
When Madeline, St Agnes' charmèd maid,
Rose, like a missioned spirit, unaware:
With silver taper's light, and pious care,
She turned, and down the aged gossip led
To a safe level matting. Now prepare,
Young Porphyro, for gazing on that bed;
She comes, she comes again, like ring-dove frayed and fled.

XXIII

Out went the taper as she hurried in;
Its little smoke, in pallid moonshine, died:
She closed the door, she panted, all akin
To spirits of the air, and visions wide:
No uttered syllable, or, woe betide!
But to her heart, her heart was voluble,
Paining with eloquence her balmy side;
As though a tongueless nightingale should swell
Her throat in vain, and die, heart-stifled, in her dell.

XXIV

A casement high and triple-arched there was,
All garlanded with carven imag'ries
Of fruits, and flowers, and bunches of knot-grass,
And diamonded with panes of quaint device,
Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes,
As are the tiger-moth's deep-damasked wings;
And in the midst, 'mong thousand heraldries,
And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings,
A shielded scutcheon blushed with blood of queens and kings.

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XXV

Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,
And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast,
As down she knelt for heaven's grace and boon;
Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together prest,
And on her silver cross soft amethyst,
And on her hair a glory, like a saint:
She seemed a splendid angel, newly drest,
Save wings, for heaven:—Porphyro grew faint:
She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from mortal taint

XXVI

Anon his heart revives: her vespers done,
Of all its wreathèd pearls her hair she frees;
Unclasps her warmèd jewels one by one;
Loosens her fragrant bodice; by degrees
Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees:
Half-hidden, like a mermaid in sea-weed,
Pensive awhile she dreams awake, and sees,
In fancy, fair St Agnes in her bed,
But dares not look behind, or all the charm is fled.

XXVII

Soon, trembling in her soft and chilly nest,
In sort of wakeful swoon, perplexed she lay,
Until the poppied warmth of sleep oppressed
Her soothèd limbs, and soul fatigued away;
Flown, like a thought, until the morrow-day;
Blissfully havened both from joy and pain;
Clasped like a missal where swart Paynims pray;
Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain,
As though a rose should shut, and be a bud again.

XXVIII

Stolen to this paradise, and so entranced,
Porphyro gazed upon her empty dress,
And listened to her breathing, if it chanced
To wake into a slumberous tenderness;

Which when he heard, that minute did he bless,
And breathed himself: then from the closet crept,
Noiseless as fear in a wide wilderness,
And over the hushed carpet, silent, stept,
And 'tween the curtains peeped, where, lo!—how fast she slept.

XXIX

Then by the bed-side, where the faded moon
Made a dim, silver twilight, soft he set
A table, and, half anguished, threw thereon
A cloth of woven crimson, gold, and jet:—
O for some drowsy Morphean amulet!
The boisterous, midnight, festive clarion,
The kettle-drum, and far-heard clarinet,
Affray his ears, though but in dying tone:—
The hall door shuts again, and all the noise is gone.

XXX

And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep,
In blanchèd linen, smooth, and lavendered,
While he from forth the closet brought a heap
Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd;
With jellies soother than the creamy curd,
And lucent syrups, tinct with cinnamon;
Manna and dates, in argosy transferred
From Fez; and spiced dainties, every one,
From silken Samarcand to cedared Lebanon.

XXXI

These delicates he heaped with glowing hand
On golden dishes and in baskets bright
Of wreathèd silver: sumptuous they stand
In the retirèd quiet of the night,
Filling the chilly room with perfume light.—
"And now, my love, my seraph fair, awake!
Thou art my heaven, and I thine eremite:
Open thine eyes, for meek St Agnes' sake,
Or I shall drowse beside thee, so my soul doth ache."

XXXII

Thus whispering, his warm, unnervèd arm
Sank in her pillow. Shaded was her dream
By the dusk curtains:—'twas a midnight charm
Impossible to melt as icèd stream:
The lustrous salvers in the moonlight gleam;
Broad golden fringe upon the carpet lies:
It seemed he never, never could redeem
From such a stedfast spell his lady's eyes;
So mused awhile, entoiled in woofèd phantasies.

XXXIII

Awakening up, he took her hollow lute,—
Tumultuous,—and, in chords that tenderest be,
He played an ancient ditty, long since mute,
In Provence called, "La belle dame sans mercy":
Close to her ear touching the melody;—
Wherewith disturbed, she uttered a soft moan:
He ceased—she panted quick—and suddenly
Her blue affrayèd eyes wide open shone:
Upon his knees he sank, pale as smooth-sculptured s

XXXIV

Her eyes were open, but she still beheld,
Now wide awake, the vision of her sleep:
There was a painful change, that nigh expelled
The blisses of her dream so pure and deep;
At which fair Madeline began to weep,
And moan forth witless words with many a sigh;
While still her gaze on Porphyro would keep;
Who knelt, with joinèd hands and piteous eye,
Fearing to move or speak, she looked so dreamingly

XXXV

"Ah, Porphyro!" said she, "but even now
Thy voice was at sweet tremble in mine ear,
Made tuneable with every sweetest vow;
And those sad eyes were spiritual and clear:

How changed thou art! how pallid, chill, and drear!
Give me that voice again, my Porphyro,
Those looks immortal, those complainings dear!
Oh, leave me not in this eternal woe,
For if thou diest, my Love, I know not where to go."

XXXVI

Beyond a mortal man impassioned far
At these voluptuous accents, he arose,
Ethereal, flushed, and like a throbbing star
Seen mid the sapphire heaven's deep repose;
Into her dream he melted, as the rose
Blendeth its odour with the violet,—
Solution sweet: meantime the frost-wind blows
Like Love's alarum pattering the sharp sleet
Against the window-panes, St Agnes' moon hath set.

XXXVII

'Tis dark: quick pattereth the flaw-blown sleet:
"This is no dream, my bride, my Madeline!"
'Tis dark: the icèd gusts still rave and beat:
"No dream, alas! alas! and woe is mine!
Porphyro will leave me here to fade and pine.—
Cruel! what traitor could thee hither bring?
I curse not, for my heart is lost in thine,
Though thou forsakest a deceivèd thing;—
A dove forlorn and lost with sick unprunèd wing."

XXXVIII

"My Madeline! sweet dreamer! lovely bride!
Say, may I be for aye thy vassal blest?
Thy beauty's shield, heart-shaped and vermeil dyed?
Ah, silver shrine, here will I take my rest
After so many hours of toil and quest,
A famished pilgrim,—saved by miracle.
Though I have found, I will not rob thy nest
Saving of thy sweet self; if thou think'st well
To trust, fair Madeline, to no rude infidel.

His yeomen round the market cross make clear an ample space;
For there behoves him to set up the standard of Her Grace.
And haughtily the trumpets peal and gaily dance the bells,
As slow upon the labouring wind the royal blazon swells.
Look how the Lion of the sea lifts up his ancient crown,
And underneath his deadly paw treads the gay lilies down.
So stalked he when he turned to flight, on that famed Picard field,
Bohemia's plume, and Genoa's bow, and Cæsar's eagle shield.
So glared he when at Agincourt in wrath he turned to bay,
And crushed and torn beneath his claws the princely hunters lay.
Ho! strike the flagstaff deep, Sir Knight: ho! scatter flowers, fair maids:
Ho! gunners, fire a loud salute: ho! gallants, draw your blades:
Thou sun, shine on her joyously; ye breezes, waft her wide;
Our glorious SEMPER EADEM, the banner of our pride.
The freshening breeze of eve unfurled that banner's massy fold;
The parting gleam of sunshine kissed that haughty scroll of gold;
Night sank upon the dusky beach, and on the purple sea,
Such night in England ne'er had been, nor e'er again shall be.
From Eddystone to Berwick bounds, from Lynn to Milford Bay,
That time of slumber was as bright and busy as the day;
For swift to east and swift to west the ghastly war-flame spread,
High on St Michael's Mount it shone; it shone on Beachy Head.

Far on the deep the Spaniards saw, along each southern shire,
Cape beyond cape, in endless range, those twinkling points of fire.
The fisher left his skiff to rock on Tamar's glittering waves:
The rugged miners poured to war from Mendip's sunless caves:
O'er Longleat's towers, o'er Cranbourne's oaks, the fiery herald flew:
He roused the shepherds of Stonehenge, the rangers of Beaulieu.
Right sharp and quick the bells all night rang out from Bristol town,
And ere the day three hundred horse had met on Clifton Down;
The sentinel on Whitehall gate looked forth into the night,
And saw o'erhanging Richmond Hill the streak of blood-red light;
Then bugle's note and cannon's roar the death-like silence broke,
[illegible]
spires;
From all the batteries of the Tower pealed loud the voice of fear;
And all the thousand masts of Thames sent back a louder cheer;
And from the furthest wards was heard the rush of hurrying feet,
And the broad streams of pikes and flags rushed down each roaring street;
And broader still became the blaze, and louder still the din,
As fast from every village round the horse came spurring in:

And eastward straight from wild Blackheath the warlike errand went,
And roused in many an ancient hall the gallant squires of Kent.
Southward from Surrey's pleasant hills flew those bright couriers forth;
High on bleak Hampstead's swarthy moor they started for the north;
And on, and on, without a pause, untired they bounded still:
All night from tower to tower they sprang: they sprang from hill to hill:
Till the proud Peak unfurled the flag o'er Darwin's rocky dales,
Till like volcanoes flared to heaven the stormy hills of Wales,
Till twelve fair counties saw the blaze on Malvern's lonely height,
Till streamed in crimson on the wind the Wrekin's crest of light,
Till broad and fierce the star came forth on Ely's stately fane,
And tower and hamlet rose in arms o'er all the boundless plain;
Till Belvoir's lordly terraces the sign to Lincoln sent,
And Lincoln sped the message on o'er the wide vale of Trent;
Till Skiddaw saw the fire that burned on Gaunt's embattled pile,
And the red glare on Skiddaw roused the burghers of Carlisle.

LORD MACAULAY

MORTE D'ARTHUR

So all day long the noise of battle roll'd
Among the mountains by the winter sea;
Until King Arthur's table, man by man,
Had fall'n in Lyonnesse about their Lord,
King Arthur: then, because his wound was deep,
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,
Sir Bedivere, the last of all his knights,
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,
A broken chancel with a broken cross,
That stood on a dark strait of barren land.
On one side lay the Ocean, and on one
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.
  Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
"The sequel of to-day unsolders all
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights
Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep
They sleep—the men I loved. I think that we
Shall never more, at any future time,
Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,
Walking about the gardens and the halls
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.
I perish by this people which I made,—
Tho' Merlin sware that I should come again
To rule once more—but let what will be, be,
I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm
That without help I cannot last till morn.
Thóu therefore take my brand Excalibur,
Which was my pride: for thou rememberest how
In those old days, one summer noon, an arm
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
Holding the sword—and how I row'd across
And took it, and have worn it, like a king:
And, wheresoever I am sung or told

In aftertime, this also shall be known:
But now delay not: take Excalibur,
And fling him far into the middle mere:
Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring me word."
  To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere:
"It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,
Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the helm.
A little thing may harm a wounded man.
Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word."
  So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he stept
And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,
Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,
Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang
Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, stepping down
By zig-zag paths, and juts of pointed rock,
Came on the shining levels of the lake.
  There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,
And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran forth
And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt:
For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,
Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work
Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long
That both his eyes were dazzled, as he stood,
This way and that dividing the swift mind,
In act to throw: but at the last it seem'd
Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd
There in the many-knotted waterflags,
That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.
So strode he back slow to the wounded king.
  Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
"Hast thou perform'd my mission which I gave?
What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?"
  And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,
And the wild water lapping on the crag."

To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale:
"Thou hast betray'd thy nature and thy name,
Not rendering true answer, as beseem'd
Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight:
For surer sign had follow'd, either hand,
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.
This is a shameful thing for men to lie.
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again
As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing
I bad thee, watch, and lightly bring me word."
Then went Sir Bedivere the second time
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
Which might have pleased the eyes of many
men.
What good should follow this, if this were done?
What harm, undone? deep harm to disobey,
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible] es.
What record, or what relic of my lord
Should be to aftertime, but empty breath
And rumours of a doubt? but were this kept,
Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,
Some one might show it at a joust of arms,
Saying, 'King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,
Wrought by the lonely maiden of the Lake.
Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps
Upon the hidden bases of the hills.'
So might some old man speak in the aftertime

To all the people, winning reverence.
But now much honour and much fame were lost."
So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,
And hid Excalibur the second time,
And so strode back slow to the wounded King.
Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily:
"What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?"
And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"I heard the water lapping on the crag,
And the long ripple washing in the reeds."
To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath:
"Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me!
Authority forgets a dying king,
Laid widow'd of the power in his eye
That bow'd the will. I see thee what thou art,
For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,
In whom should meet the offices of all,
Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt;
Either from lust of gold, or like a girl
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,
And the third time may prosper, get thee hence:
But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
I will arise and slay thee with my hands."
Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,
And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged
Among the bulrush-beds, and clutch'd the sword,
And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The great brand
Made lightnings in the splendour of the moon,
And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in an arch,
Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,
Seen where the moving isles of winter shock
By night, with noises of the northern sea.
So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur:
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,

And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.
[illegible]
Speak out: what is it thou hast heard, or seen?"
  And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems
Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,
Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.
[illegible]ling him;
[illegible]
[illegible]ul,
That caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere."
  And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard:
"My end draws nigh; 'tis time that I were gone.
Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,
And bear me to the margin; yet I fear
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die."
  So saying, from the pavement he half rose,
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere
Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,
And would have spoken, but he found not words,
Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,
O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,
And rising bore him thro' the place of tombs.
  But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted hard,
Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,

Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he walk'd,
Larger than human on the frozen hills.
He heard the deep behind him, and a cry
Before. His own thought drove him, like a goad.
Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves
And barren chasms, and all to left and right
The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as he based
His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armèd heels—
And on a sudden, lo! the level lake,
And the long glories of the winter moon.
  Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,
Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,
Beneath them; and descending they were ware
That all the decks were dense with stately forms
Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream—by these
Three Queens with crowns of gold—and from them rose
A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars,
And, as it were one voice, an agony
Of lamentation, like a wind, that shrills
All night in a waste land, where no one comes,
Or hath come, since the making of the world.
  Then murmur'd Arthur, "Place me in the barge,"
And to the barge they came. There those three Queens
Put forth their hands, and took the King, and wept.
But she, that rose the tallest of them all
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,
And loosed the shatter'd casque, and chafed his hands,
And call'd him by his name, complaining loud,
And dropping bitter tears against his brow
Striped with dark blood: for all his face was white
And colourless, and like the wither'd moon
Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east;
And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd with drops
Of onset; and the light and lustrous curls—
That made his forehead like a rising sun

High from the dais-throne—were parch'd with dust;
Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
From spur to plume a star of tournament,
[illegible]
[illegible]

"Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go?
Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes?
For now I see the true old times are dead,
When every morning brought a noble chance,
And every chance brought out a noble knight.
Such times have been not since the light that led
The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.
But now the whole ROUND TABLE is dissolved
Which was an image of the mighty world;
And I, the last, go forth companionless,
And the days darken round me, and the years,
Among new men, strange faces, other minds."
And slowly answer'd Arthur from the barge:
"The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils Himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.
Comfort thyself: what comfort is in me?
I have lived my life, and that which I have done
May He within Himself make pure! but thou,
If thou shouldst never see my face again,
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by
prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?

For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.
But now farewell. I am going a long way
With these thou seest—if indeed I go—
(For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)
To the island-valley of Avilion;
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard-lawns
And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea,
Where I will heal me of my grievous wound."
So said he, and the barge with oar and sail
Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan
That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere
Revolving many memories, till the hull
Look'd one black dot against the verge of dawn,
And on the mere the wailing died away.

LORD TENNYSON

THE LOTOS-EATERS

"COURAGE!" he said, and pointed toward the land,
"This mounting wave will roll us shoreward soon."
In the afternoon they came unto a land
In which it seemèd always afternoon.
All round the coast the languid air did swoon,
Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.
Full-faced above the valley stood the moon;
And like a downward smoke, the slender stream
Along the cliff to fall, and pause, and fall did seem.

A land of streams! some, like a downward smoke,
Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go;

And some thro' wavering lights and shadows broke,
Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.
They saw the gleaming river seaward flow
From the inner land: far off, three mountain-tops,
Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,
Stood sunset-flush'd: and, dew'd with showery drops,
Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the woven copse.

The charmèd sunset linger'd low adown
In the red West: thro' mountain clefts the dale
Was seen far inland, and the yellow down
Border'd with palm, and many a winding vale
And meadow, set with slender galingale;
A land where all things always seem'd the same!
And round about the keel with faces pale,
Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,
The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters came.

Branches they bore of that enchanted stem,
Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they gave
To each, but whoso did receive of them,
And taste, to him the gushing of the wave
Far, far away did seem to mourn and rave
On alien shores; and if his fellow spake,
His voice was thin, as voices from the grave;
And deep-asleep he seem'd, yet all awake,
And music in his ears his beating heart did make.

They sat them down upon the yellow sand,
Between the sun and moon upon the shore;
And sweet it was to dream of Fatherland,
Of child, and wife, and slave; but evermore
Most weary seem'd the sea, weary the oar,
Weary the wandering fields of barren foam.
Then some one said, "We will return no more";
And all at once they sang, "Our island home
Is far beyond the wave; we will no longer roam."

CHORIC SONG

I

THERE is sweet music here that softer falls
Than petals from blown roses on the grass,
Or night-dews on still waters between walls
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass;
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies,
Than tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes;
Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful
skies.
Here are cool mosses deep,
And thro' the moss the ivies creep,
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep,
And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in sleep

2

Why are we weigh'd upon with heaviness,
And utterly consumed with sharp distress,
While all things else have rest from weariness?
All things have rest: why should we toil alone,
We only toil, who are the first of things,
And make perpetual moan,
Still from one sorrow to another thrown:
Nor ever fold our wings,
And cease from wanderings,
Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm;
Nor harken what the inner spirit sings,
" There is no joy but calm!"
Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of thin

3

Lo! in the middle of the wood,
The folded leaf is woo'd from out the bud
With winds upon the branch, and there
Grows green and broad, and takes no care,
Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon

Nightly dew-fed; and turning yellow
Falls, and floats adown the air.
Lo! sweeten'd with the summer light,
The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,
Drops in a silent autumn night.
All its allotted length of days,
The flower ripens in its place,
Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,
Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

4

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,
Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea.
Death is the end of life; ah, why
Should life all labour be?
Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,
And in a little while our lips are dumb
Let us alone. What is it that will last?
All things are taken from us, and become
Portions and parcels of the dreadful Past.
Let us alone. What pleasure can we have
To war with evil? Is there any peace
In ever climbing up the climbing wave?
All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave
In silence; ripen, fall and cease.
Give us long rest or death, dark death, or dreamful ease.

5

How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,
With half-shut eyes ever to seem
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
Eating the Lotos day by day,
To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,

CHORIC SONG

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5

How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,
With half-shut eyes ever to seem
Falling asleep in a half-dream!
To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,
Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the height;
To hear each other's whisper'd speech;
Eating the Lotos day by day,
To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,

And tender curving lines of creamy spray;
To lend our hearts and spirits wholly
To the influence of mild-minded melancholy;
To muse and brood and live again in memory,
With those old faces of our infancy
Heap'd over with a mound of grass,
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of brass!

6

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,
And dear the last embraces of our wives
And their warm tears: but all hath suffer'd change;
For surely now our household hearths are cold:
Our sons inherit us: our looks are strange:
And we should come like ghosts to trouble joy.
Or else the island princes over-bold
Have eat our substance, and the minstrel sings
Before them of the ten years' war in Troy,
And our great deeds, as half-forgotten things.
Is there confusion in the little isle?
Let what is broken so remain.
The Gods are hard to reconcile:
'Tis hard to settle order once again.
There *is* confusion worse than death,
Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,
Long labour unto aged breath,
Sore task to hearts worn out with many wars
And eyes grown dim with gazing on the pilot-s

7

But, propt on beds of amaranth and moly,
How sweet (while warm airs lull us, blowing lo
With half-dropt eyelid still,
Beneath a heaven dark and holy,
To watch the long bright river drawing slowly
His waters from the purple hill—

To hear the dewy echoes calling
From cave to cave thro' the thick-twined vine—
To watch the emerald-colour'd water falling
Thro' many a wov'n acanthus-wreath divine!
Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling brine,
Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd out beneath the pine.

8

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak:
The Lotos blows by every winding creek:
All day the wind breathes low with mellower tone:
Thro' every hollow cave and alley lone
Round and round the spicy downs the yellow Lotos-dust is blown.
We have had enough of action, and of motion we,
Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard, when the surge was seething free,
Where the wallowing monster spouted his foam-fountains in the sea.
Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal mind,
In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie reclined
On the hills like Gods together, careless of mankind.
For they lie beside their nectar, and the bolts are hurl'd
Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are lightly curl'd
Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleaming world:
Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted lands,
Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring deeps and fiery sands,
Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking ships, and praying hands.
But they smile, they find a music centred in a doleful song
Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient tale of wrong,
Like a tale of little meaning tho' the words are strong;
Chanted from an ill-used race of men that cleave the soil,

Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with enduring toil,
Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and wine and oil:
Till they perish and they suffer—some, 'tis whisper'd—
    down in hell
Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian valleys dwell,
Resting weary limbs at last on beds of asphodel.
Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil, the shore
Than labour in the deep mid-ocean, wind and wave and
    oar;
Oh, rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander more.

LORD TENNYSON

ANDREA DEL SARTO

(CALLED "THE FAULTLESS PAINTER")

But do not let us quarrel any more,
No, my Lucrezia; bear with me for once:
Sit down and all shall happen as you wish.
You turn your face, but does it bring your heart?
I'll work then for your friend's friend, never fear,
Treat his own subject after his own way,
Fix his own time, accept too his own price,
And shut the money into this small hand
When next it takes mine. Will it? tenderly?
Oh, I'll content him,—but to-morrow, Love!
I often am much wearier than you think,
This evening more than usual, and it seems
As if—forgive now—should you let me sit
Here by the window with your hand in mine
And look a half-hour forth on Fiesole,
Both of one mind, as married people use,
Quietly, quietly, the evening through,
I might get up to-morrow to my work
Cheerful and fresh as ever. Let us try.
To-morrow how you shall be glad for this!

Your soft hand is a woman of itself,
And mine the man's bared breast she curls inside.
Don't count the time lost, either; you must serve
For each of the five pictures we require—
It saves a model. So! keep looking so—
My serpentining beauty, rounds on rounds!
—How could you ever prick those perfect ears,
Even to put the pearl there! oh, so sweet—
My face, my moon, my everybody's moon,
Which everybody looks on and calls his,
And, I suppose, is looked on by in turn,
While she looks—no one's: very dear, no less!
You smile? why, there's my picture ready made.
There's what we painters call our harmony!
A common greyness silvers everything,—
All in a twilight, you and I alike
—You, at the point of your first pride in me
(That's gone you know),—but I, at every point;
My youth, my hope, my art, being all toned down
To yonder sober pleasant Fiesole.
[illegible]

The last monk leaves the garden; days decrease
And autumn grows, autumn in everything.
Eh? the whole seems to fall into a shape
As if I saw alike my work and self
And all that I was born to be and do,
A twilight-piece. Love, we are in God's hand.
How strange now, looks the life he makes us lead!
So free we seem, so fettered fast we are:
I feel he laid the fetter: let it lie!
This chamber for example—turn your head—
All that's behind us! you don't understand
Nor care to understand about my art,
But you can hear at least when people speak;
And that cartoon, the second from the door

—It is the thing, Love! so such things should be—
Behold Madonna, I am bold to say.
I can do with my pencil what I know,
What I see, what at bottom of my heart
I wish for, if I ever wish so deep—
Do easily, too—when I say perfectly
I do not boast, perhaps: yourself are judge
Who listened to the Legate's talk last week,
And just as much they used to say in France.
At any rate 'tis easy, all of it,
No sketches first, no studies, that's long past—
I do what many dream of all their lives
—Dream? strive to do, and agonize to do,
And fail in doing. I could count twenty such
On twice your fingers, and not leave this town,
Who strive—you don't know how the others strive
To paint a little thing like that you smeared
Carelessly passing with your robes afloat—
Yet do much less, so much less, some one says,
(I know his name, no matter) so much less!
Well, less is more, Lucrezia! I am judged.
There burns a truer light of God in them,
In their vexed, beating, stuffed and stopped-up brain,
Heart, or whate'er else, than goes on to prompt
This low-pulsed forthright craftsman's hand of mine.
Their works drop groundward, but themselves, I kno
Reach many a time a heaven that's shut to me,
Enter and take their place there sure enough,
Though they come back and cannot tell the world.
My works are nearer heaven, but I sit here.
The sudden blood of these men! at a word—
Praise them, it boils, or blame them, it boils too.
I, painting from myself and to myself,
Know what I do, am unmoved by men's blame
Or their praise either. Somebody remarks
Morello's outline there is wrongly traced,
His hue mistaken—what of that? or else,

Rightly traced and well ordered—what of that?
Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,
Or what's a Heaven for? all is silver-grey
Placid and perfect with my art—the worse!
I know both what I want and what might gain—
And yet how profitless to know, to sigh
"Had I been two, another and myself,
Our head would have o'erlooked the world!" No
doubt.
Yonder's a work, now, of that famous youth
The Urbinate who died five years ago.
('Tis copied, George Vasari sent it me.)
Well, I can fancy how he did it all,
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
That arm is wrongly put—and there again—
A fault to pardon in the drawing's lines,
Its body, so to speak! its soul is right,
He means right—that, a child may understand.
Still, what an arm! and I could alter it.
But all the play, the insight and the stretch—
Out of me! out of me! And wherefore out?
Had you enjoined them on me, given me soul,
We might have risen to Rafael, I and you.
Nay, Love, you did give all I asked, I think—
More than I merit, yes, by many times.
But had you—oh, with the same perfect brow,
And perfect eyes, and more than perfect mouth,
And the low voice my soul hears, as a bird
The fowler's pipe, and follows to the snare—
Had you, with these the same, but brought a mind!
Some women do so. Had the mouth there urged
"God and the glory! never care for gain.
The present by the future, what is that?
Live for fame, side by side with Angelo—
Rafael is waiting Up to God all three!"

I might have done it for you. So it seems—
Perhaps not. All is as God over-rules.
Beside, incentives come from the soul's self;
The rest avail not. Why do I need you?
What wife had Rafael, or has Angelo?
In this world, who can do a thing, will not—
And who would do it, cannot, I perceive:
Yet the will's somewhat—somewhat, too, the power—
And thus we half-men struggle. At the end,
God, I conclude, compensates, punishes.
'Tis safer for me, if the award be strict,
That I am something underrated here,
Poor this long while, despised, to speak the truth.
I dared not, do you know, leave home all day,
For fear of chancing on the Paris lords.
The best is when they pass and look aside;
But they speak sometimes: I must bear it all.
Well may they speak! That Francis, that first time,
And that long festal year at Fontainebleau!
I surely then could sometimes leave the ground,
Put on the glory, Rafael's daily wear,
In that humane great monarch's golden look,—
One finger in his beard or twisted curl
Over his mouth's good mark that made the smile,
One arm about my shoulder, round my neck,
The jingle of his gold chain in my ear,
I painting proudly with his breath on me,
All his court round him, seeing with his eyes,
Such frank French eyes, and such a fire of souls
Profuse, my hand kept plying by those hearts,—
And, best of all, this, this, this face beyond,
This in the back-ground, waiting on my work,
To crown the issue with a last reward!
A good time, was it not, my kingly days?
And had you not grown restless—but I know—
'Tis done and past; *'twas right, my instinct said;*
Too live the life grew, golden and not grey—

And I'm the weak-eyed bat no sun should tempt
Out of the grange whose four walls make his world.
How could it end in any other way?
You called me, and I came home to your heart.
The triumph was to have ended there—then if
I reached it ere the triumph, what is lost?
Let my hands frame your face in your hair's gold,
You beautiful Lucrezia that are mine!
"Rafael did this, Andrea painted that—
The Roman's is the better when you pray,
But still the other's Virgin was his wife——"
Men will excuse me. I am glad to judge
Both pictures in your presence; clearer grows
My better fortune, I resolve to think.
For, do you know, Lucrezia, as God lives,
Said one day Angelo, his very self,
To Rafael . . . I have known it all these years . . .
(When the young man was flaming out his thoughts
Upon a palace-wall for Rome to see,
Too lifted up in heart because of it)
"Friend, there's a certain sorry little scrub
Goes up and down our Florence, none cares how,
Who, were he set to plan and execute
As you are pricked on by your popes and kings,
Would bring the sweat into that brow of yours!"
[illegible]
[illegible]
Give the chalk here—quick, thus the line should go!
Ay, but the soul! he's Rafael! rub it out!
Still, all I care for, if he spoke the truth,
(What he? why, who but Michael Angelo?
Do you forget already words like those?)
If really there was such a chance, so lost,
Is, whether you're—not grateful—but more pleased.
Well, let me think so. And you smile indeed!
This hour has been an hour! Another smile?
If you would sit thus by me every night

I should work better, do you comprehend?
I mean that I should earn more, give you more.
See, it is settled dusk now; there's a star;
Morello's gone, the watch-lights show the wall,
The cue-owls speak the name we call them by.
Come from the window, Love,—come in, at last,
Inside the melancholy little house
We built to be so gay with. God is just.
King Francis may forgive me. Oft at nights
When I look up from painting, eyes tired out,
The walls become illumined, brick from brick
Distinct, instead of mortar fierce bright gold,
That gold of his I did cement them with!
Let us but love each other. Must you go?
That Cousin here again? he waits outside?
Must see you—you, and not with me? Those loans!
More gaming debts to pay? you smiled for that?
Well, let smiles buy me! have you more to spend?
While hand and eye and something of a heart
Are left me, work's my ware, and what's it worth?
I'll pay my fancy. Only let me sit
The grey remainder of the evening out,
Idle, you call it, and muse perfectly
How I could paint were I but back in France,
One picture, just one more—the Virgin's face,
Not yours this time! I want you at my side
To hear them—that is, Michael Angelo—
Judge all I do and tell you of its worth.
Will you? To-morrow, satisfy your friend.
I take the subjects for his corridor,
Finish the portrait out of hand—there, there,
And throw him in another thing or two
If he demurs; the whole should prove enough
To pay for this same Cousin's freak. Beside,
What's better and what's all I care about,
Get you the thirteen scudi for the ruff.

Love, does that please you? Ah, but what does he,
The Cousin? what does he to please you more?

I am grown peaceful as old age to-night.
I regret little, I would change still less.
Since there my past life lies, why alter it?
The very wrong to Francis! it is true
I took his coin, was tempted and complied,
And built this house and sinned, and all is said.
My father and my mother died of want.
Well, had I riches of my own? you see
How one gets rich! Let each one bear his lot.
They were born poor, lived poor, and poor they died:
And I have laboured somewhat in my time
And not been paid profusely. Some good son
Paint my two hundred pictures—let him try!
No doubt, there's something strikes a balance. Yes,
You loved me quite enough, it seems to-night.
This must suffice me here. What would one have?
In heaven, perhaps, new chances, one more chance—
Four great walls in the New Jerusalem
Meted on each side by the angel's reed,
For Leonard, Rafael, Angelo and me
To cover—the three first without a wife,
While I have mine! So—still they overcome
Because there's still Lucrezia,—as I choose.

Again the Cousin's whistle! Go, my Love.

ROBERT BROWNING

BY THE FIRE-SIDE

I

How well I know what I mean to do
  When the long dark Autumn evenings come,
And where, my soul, is thy pleasant hue?
  With the music of all thy voices, dumb
In life's November too!

II

I shall be found by the fire, suppose,
  O'er a great wise book as beseemeth age,
While the shutters flap as the cross-wind blows,
  And I turn the page, and I turn the page,
Not verse now, only prose!

III

Till the young ones whisper, finger on lip,
  "There he is at it, deep in Greek:
Now then, or never, out we slip
  To cut from the hazels by the creek
A mainmast for our ship."

IV

I shall be at it indeed, my friends!
  Greek puts already on either side
Such a branch-work forth as soon extends
  To a vista opening far and wide,
And I pass out where it ends.

V

The outside-frame like your hazel-trees—
  But the inside-archway narrows fast,
And a rarer sort succeeds to these,
  And we slope to Italy at last
And youth, by green degrees.

VI

I follow wherever I am led,
  Knowing so well the leader's hand:
Oh, woman-country, wooed not wed,
  Loved all the more by earth's male-lands,
Laid to their hearts instead!

VII

Look at the ruined chapel again
  Half-way up in the Alpine gorge.
Is that a tower, I point you plain,
  Or is it a mill or an iron forge
Breaks solitude in vain?

VIII

A turn, and we stand in the heart of things;
  The woods are round us, heaped and dim;
From slab to slab how it slips and springs—
  The thread of water single and slim,
Through the ravage some torrent brings!

IX

Does it feed the little lake below?
  That speck of white just on its marge
Is Pella; see, in the evening glow,
  How sharp the silver spear-heads charge
When Alp meets Heaven in snow.

X

On our other side is the straight-up rock;
  And a path is kept 'twixt the gorge and it
By boulder-stones where lichens mock
  The marks on a moth, and small ferns fit
Their teeth to the polished block.

XI

Oh, the sense of the yellow mountain flowers,
  And the thorny balls, each three in one,
The chestnuts throw on our path in showers!
  —For the drop of the woodland fruit's begun,
These early November hours,

XII

That crimson the creeper's leaf across
  Like a splash of blood, intense, abrupt,
O'er a shield else gold from rim to boss,
  And lay it for show on the fairy-cupped
Elf-needled mat of moss,

XIII

By the rose-flesh mushrooms, undivulged
  Last evening—nay, in to-day's first dew
Yon sudden coral nipple bulged
  Where a freaked, fawn-coloured, flaky crew
Of toad-stools peep indulged.

XIV

And yonder, at foot of the fronting ridge
  That takes the turn to a range beyond,
Is the chapel reached by the one-arched bridge
  Where the water is stopped in a stagnant pond
Danced over by the midge.

XV

The chapel and bridge are of stone alike,
  Blackish-grey and mostly wet;
Cut hemp-stalks steep in the narrow dyke.
  See here again, how the lichens fret
And the roots of the ivy strike!

XVI

Poor little place, where its one priest comes
  On a festa-day, if he comes at all,
To the dozen folk from their scattered homes,
  Gathered within that precinct small
By the dozen ways one roams—

XVII

To drop from the charcoal-burners' huts,
  Or climb from the hemp-dressers' low shed,
Leave the grange where the woodman stores his nuts,
  Or the wattled cote where the fowlers spread
Their gear on the rock's bare juts.

XVIII

It has some pretension too, this front,
  With its bits of fresco half-moon-wise
Set over the porch, Art's early wont:
  'Tis John in the Desert, I surmise,
But has borne the weather's brunt—

XIX

Not from the fault of the builder, though,
  For a pent-house properly projects
Where three carved beams make a certain show,
  Dating—good thought of our architect's—
'Five, six, nine, he lets you know.

XX

And all day long a bird sings there,
  And a stray sheep drinks at the pond at times;
The place is silent and aware;
  It has had its scenes, its joys and crimes,
But that is its own affair.

XXI

My perfect wife, my Leonor,
  Oh, heart my own, oh, eyes, mine too,
Whom else could I dare look backward for,
  With whom beside should I dare pursue
The path grey heads abhor?

XXII

For it leads to a crag's sheer edge with them;
  Youth, flowery all the way, there stops—
Not they; age threatens and they contemn,
  Till they reach the gulf wherein youth drops,
One inch from our life's safe hem!

XXIII

With me, youth led . . . I will speak now,
  No longer watch you as you sit
Reading by fire-light, that great brow
  And the spirit-small hand propping it,
Mutely, my heart knows how—

XXIV

When, if I think but deep enough,
  You are wont to answer, prompt as rhyme;
And you, too, find without a rebuff
  The response your soul seeks many a time
Piercing its fine flesh-stuff.

XXV

My own, confirm me! If I tread
  This path back, is it not in pride
To think how little I dreamed it led
  To an age so blest that by its side
Youth seems the waste instead?

XXVI

My own, see where the years conduct!
  At first, 'twas something our two souls
Should mix as mists do; each is sucked
  Into each now: on, the new stream rolls,
Whatever rocks obstruct.

XXVII

Think, when our one soul understands
  The great Word which makes all things new—
When earth breaks up and Heaven expands—
  How will the change strike me and you
In the House not made with hands?

XXVIII

Oh, I must feel your brain prompt mine,
  Your heart anticipate my heart,
You must be just before, in fine,
  See and make me see, for your part,
New depths of the divine!

XXIX

But who could have expected this,
  When we two drew together first
Just for the obvious bliss,
  To satisfy life's daily thirst
With a thing men seldom miss?

XXX

Come back with me to the first of all,
  Let us lean and love it over again—
Let us now forget and now recall,
  Break the rosary in a pearly rain,
And gather what we let fall!

XXXI

What did I say?—that a small bird sings
  All day long, save when a brown pair
Of hawks from the wood float with wide wings
  Strained to a bell: 'gainst the noon-day glare
You count the streaks and rings.

XXXII

But at afternoon or almost eve
  'Tis better; then the silence grows
To that degree, you half believe
  It must get rid of what it knows,
Its bosom does so heave.

XXXIII

Hither we walked, then, side by side,
  Arm in arm and cheek to cheek,
And still I questioned or replied,
  While my heart, convulsed to really speak,
Lay choking in its pride.

XXXIV

Silent the crumbling bridge we cross,
  And pity and praise the chapel sweet,
And care about the fresco's loss,
  And wish for our souls a like retreat,
And wonder at the moss.

XXXV

Stoop and kneel at the settle under—
  Look through the window's grated square:
Nothing to see! for fear of plunder,
  The cross is down and the altar bare
As if thieves don't fear thunder.

XXXVI

We stoop and look in through the grate,
  See the little porch and rustic door,
Read duly the dead builder's date,
  Then cross the bridge we crossed before,
Take the path again—but wait!

XXXVII

Oh, moment, one and infinite!
  The water slips o'er stock and stone;
The West is tender, hardly bright:
  How grey at once is the evening grown—
One star, the chrysolite!

XXXVIII

We two stood there with never a third,
  But each by each, as each knew well:
The sights we saw and the sounds we heard,
  The lights and the shades made up a spell
Till the trouble grew and stirred.

XXXIX

Oh, the little more, and how much it is!
  And the little less, and what worlds away!
How a sound shall quicken content to bliss,
  Or a breath suspend the blood's best play,
And life be a proof of this!

XL

Had she willed it, still had stood the screen
  So slight, so sure, 'twixt my love and her:
I could fix her face with a guard between,
  And find her soul as when friends confer,
Friends—lovers that might have been.

XLI

For my heart had a touch of the woodland time,
Wanting to sleep now over its best,
Shake the whole tree in the summer-prime,
But bring to the last leaf no such test:
"Hold the last fast!" runs the rhyme.

XLII

For a chance to make your little much,
To gain a lover and lose a friend,
Venture the tree and a myriad such,
When nothing you mar but the year can mend!
But a last leaf—fear to touch!

XLIII

Yet should it unfasten itself and fall
Eddying down till it find your face
At some slight wind—(best chance of all)
Be your heart henceforth its dwelling-place
You trembled to forestal!

XLIV

Worth how well, those dark grey eyes,
—That hair so dark and dear, how worth
That a man should strive and agonize,
And taste a very hell on earth
For the hope of such a prize!

XLV

Oh, you might have turned and tried a man,
Set him a space to weary and wear,
And prove which suited more your plan,
His best of hope or his worst despair,
Yet end as he began.

XLVI

But you spared me this, like the heart you are,
  And filled my empty heart at a word.
If you join two lives, there is oft a scar,
  They are one and one, with a shadowy third;
One near one is too far.

XLVII

A moment after, and hands unseen
  Were hanging the night around us fast.
But we knew that a bar was broken between
  Life and life; we were mixed at last
In spite of the mortal screen.

XLVIII

The forests had done it; there they stood;
  We caught for a second the powers at play:
They had mingled us so, for once and for good,
  Their work was done—we might go or stay,
They relapsed to their ancient mood.

XLIX

How the world is made for each of us!
  How all we perceive and know in it
Tends to some moment's product thus,
  When a soul declares itself—to wit,
By its fruit—the thing it does!

L

Be Hate that fruit or Love that fruit,
  It forwards the General Deed of Man,
And each of the Many helps to recruit
  The life of the race by a general plan;
Each living his own, to boot.

LI

I am named and known by that hour's feat;
  There took my station and degree:
So grew my own small life complete
  As nature obtained her best of me—
One born to love you, Sweet!

LII

And to watch you sink by the fire-side now
  Back again, as you mutely sit
Musing by fire-light, that great brow
  And the spirit-small hand propping it
Yonder, my heart knows how!

LIII

So, the earth has gained by one man more,
  And the gain of earth must be Heaven's gain too,
And the whole is well worth thinking o'er
  When the autumn comes: which I mean to do
One day, as I said before.

ROBERT BROWNING

SOHRAB AND RUSTUM

AND the first grey of morning fill'd the east,
And the fog rose out of the Oxus stream.
But all the Tartar camp along the stream
Was hush'd, and still the men were plunged in sleep;
Sohrab alone, he slept not; all night long
He had lain wakeful, tossing on his bed;
But when the grey dawn stole into his tent,
He rose, and clad himself, and girt his sword,
And took his horseman's cloak, and left his tent,
And went abroad into the cold wet fog,
Through the dim camp to Peran-Wisa's tent.

Through the black Tartar tents he passed, which stood
Clustering like bee-hives on the low flat strand
Of Oxus, where the summer-floods o'erflow
When the sun melts the snows in high Pamere;
Through the black tents he pass'd, o'er that low strand,
And to a hillock came, a little back
From the stream's brink—the spot where first a boat,
Crossing the stream in summer, scrapes the land.
The men of former times had crowned the top
With a clay fort; but that was fall'n, and now
The Tartars built there Peran-Wisa's tent,
A dome of laths, and o'er it felts were spread.
And Sohrab came there, and went in, and stood
Upon the thick piled carpets in the tent,
And found the old man sleeping on his bed
Of rugs and felts, and near him lay his arms.
And Peran-Wisa heard him, though the step
Was dull'd; for he slept light, an old man's sleep,
And he rose quickly on one arm, and said:
"Who art thou? for it is not yet clear dawn.
Speak! is there news, or any night alarm?"
But Sohrab came to the bedside, and said:
"Thou know'st me, Peran-Wisa! it is I.
The sun is not yet risen, and the foe
Sleep; but I sleep not; all night long I lie
Tossing and wakeful, and I come to thee.
For so did King Afrasiab bid me seek
Thy counsel, and to heed thee as thy son,
In Samarcand, before the army march'd;
And I will tell thee what my heart desires.
Thou know'st if, since from Ader-baijan first
I came among the Tartars and bore arms,
I have still served Afrasiab well, and shown,
At my boy's years, the courage of a man.
This too thou know'st, that while I still bear on
The conquering Tartar ensigns through the world
And beat the Persians back on every field,

I seek one man, one man, and one alone—
Rustum, my father; who I hoped should greet,
Should one day greet, upon some well-fought field
His not unworthy, not inglorious son.
So I long hoped, but him I never find.
Come then, hear now, and grant me what I ask.
Let the two armies rest to-day; but I
Will challenge forth the bravest Persian lords
To meet me, man to man; if I prevail,
Rustum will surely hear it; if I fall—
Old man, the dead need no one, claim no kin.
  Dim is the rumour of a common fight,
Where host meets host, and many names are sunk:
But of a single combat fame speaks clear."
  He spoke; and Peran-Wisa took the hand
Of the young man in his, and sigh'd, and said:
  "O Sohrab, an unquiet heart is thine!
Canst thou not rest among the Tartar chiefs,
And share the battle's common chance with us
Who love thee, but must press for ever first,
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Seek him in peace, and carry to his arms,
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But far hence seek him, for he is not here.
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His herald to his side, and went abroad.
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Haman, who next to Peran-Wisa ruled
The host, and still was in his lusty prime.
From their black tents, long files of horse, they stream'd,
As when some grey November morn the files,
In marching order spread, of long-necked cranes
Stream over Casbin and the southern slopes
Of Elburz, from the Aralian estuaries,
Or some frore Caspian reed-bed, southward bound
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From ravening, and who govern Rustum's son?
Go, I will grant thee what thy heart desires."
So said he, and dropp'd Sohrab's hand, and left
His bed, and the warm rugs whereon he lay;
And o'er his chilly limbs his woollen coat
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And threw a white cloak round him, and he took
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And those from Attruck and the Caspian sands;
Light men and on light steeds, who only drink
The acrid milk of camels, and their wells.
And then a swarm of wandering horse, who came
From far and a more doubtful service own'd;
The Tartars of Ferghana, from the banks
Of the Jaxartes, men with scanty beards
And close-set skull caps; and those wilder hordes
Who roam o'er Kipchak and the northern waste,
Kalmucks and unkempt Kuzzaks, tribes who stray
Nearest the Pole, and wandering Kirghizzes,
Who come on shaggy ponies from Pamere—
These all filed out from camp into the plain.
And on the other side the Persians form'd;—
First a light cloud of horse, Tartars they seem'd,
The Ilyats of Khorassan; and behind,
The royal troops of Persia, horse and foot,
Marshall'd battalions bright in burnish'd steel.
But Peran-Wisa with his herald came,
Threading the Tartar squadrons to the front,
And with his staff kept back the foremost ranks.
And when Ferood, who led the Persians, saw
That Peran-Wisa kept the Tartars back,
He took his spear, and to the front he came,
And check'd his ranks, and fix'd them where they stood.
And the old Tartar came upon the sand
Betwixt the silent hosts, and spake, and said:
"Ferood, and ye, Persians and Tartars, hear!
Let there be truce between the hosts to-day.
But choose a champion from the Persian lords
To fight our champion Sohrab, man to man."
As, in the country, on a morn in June,
When the dew glistens on the pearled ears,
A shiver runs through the deep corn for joy—
So, when they heard what Peran-Wisa said,
A thrill through all the Tartar squadrons ran
Of pride and hope for Sohrab, whom they loved.

But as a troop of pedlars, from Cabool,
Cross underneath the Indian Caucasus,
That vast sky-neighbouring mountain of milk snow;
Crossing so high, that, as they mount, they pass
Long flocks of travelling birds dead on the snow,
Choked by the air, and scarce can they themselves
Slake their parch'd throats with sugar'd mulberries—
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
To counsel; Gudurz and Zoarrah came,
And Feraburz, who ruled the Persian host
Second, and was the uncle of the King;
These came and counsell'd, and then Gudurz said:
"*Ferood, shame bids us take their challenge up,*
Yet champion have we none to match this youth.
He has the wild stag's foot, the lion's heart.
But Rustum came last night; aloof he sits
And sullen, and has pitched his tents apart
Him will I seek, and carry to his ear
The Tartar *challenge, and this young man's name;*
Haply he will forget his wrath, and fight.
Stand forth the while, and take their challenge up."
So spake he; and Ferood stood forth and cried:
"Old man, be it agreed as thou hast said!
Let Sohrab arm, and we will find a man."
He spake; and Peran-Wisa turn'd, and strode
Back through the opening squadrons to his tent.
But through the anxious Persians Gudurz ran,
And cross'd the camp which lay behind, and reach'd,
Out on the sands beyond it, Rustum's tents.
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
And Gudurz enter'd Rustum's tent, and found
Rustum; his morning meal was done, but still

The table stood before him, charged with food-
A side of roasted sheep, and cakes of bread,
And dark green melons; and there Rustum sat
Listless, and held a falcon on his wrist,
And play'd with it; but Gudurz came and stoo
Before him; and he look'd, and saw him stand,
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And greeted Gudurz with both hands, and said
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A son so famed, so brave, to send to war,
And I to tarry with the snow-hair'd Zal,
My father, whom the robber Afghans vex,

And clip his borders short, and drive his herds,
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And spend the goodly treasures I have got,
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  He spoke, and smiled; and Gudurz made reply:
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Thee most of all, and thou, whom most he seeks,
Hidest thy face? Take heed lest men should say:
Like some old miser, Rustum hoards his fame,
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He spoke, and frown'd; and Gudurz turn'd, and ran
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Fear at his wrath, but joy that Rustum came.
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And clad himself in steel; the arms he chose
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Only his helm was rich, inlaid with gold,
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A son so famed, so brave, to send to war,
And I to tarry with the snow-hair'd Zal,
My father, whom the robber Afghans vex,

And with my great name fence that weak old man,
And spend the goodly treasures I have got,
And rest my age, and hear of Sohrab's fame,
And leave to death the hosts of thankless kings,
And with these slaughterous hands draw sword no more."
  He spoke, and smiled; and Gudurz made reply:
"What then, O Rustum, will men say to this,
When Sohrab dares our bravest forth, and seeks
Thee most of all, and thou, whom most he seeks,
Hidest thy face? Take heed lest men should say:
Like some old miser, Rustum hoards his fame,
And shuns to peril it with younger men."
  And, greatly moved, then Rustum made reply:
"O Gudurz, wherefore dost thou say such words?
Thou knowest better words than this to say.
What is one more, one less, obscure or famed,
Valiant or craven, young or old, to me?
Are not they mortal, am not I myself?
But who for men of nought would do great deeds?
Come, thou shalt see how Rustum hoards his fame!
But I will fight unknown, and in plain arms;
Let not men say of Rustum, he was match'd
In single fight with any mortal man."
He spoke, and frown'd; and Gudurz turn'd, and ran
Back quickly through the camp in fear and joy—
Fear at his wrath, but joy that Rustum came.
But Rustum strode to his tent-door, and call'd
His followers in, and bade them bring his arms,
And clad himself in steel; the arms he chose
Were plain, and on his shield was no device,
[illegible]

So arm'd, he issued forth; and Ruksh, his horse,

Followed him like a faithful hound at heel—
Ruksh, whose renown was noised through all the earth,
The horse whom Rustum on a foray once
Did in Bokhâra by the river find
A colt beneath its dam, and drove him home,
And rear'd him; a bright bay, with lofty crest,
Dight with a saddle-cloth of broider'd green
Crusted with gold, and on the ground were work'd
All beasts of chase, all beasts which hunters know.
So follow'd, Rustum left his tents, and cross'd
The camp, and to the Persian host appear'd.
And all the Persians knew him, and with shouts
Hail'd; but the Tartars knew not who he was.
And dear as the wet diver to the eyes
Of his pale wife who waits and weeps on shore,
By sandy Bahrein, in the Persian Gulf,
Plunging all day in the blue waves, at night,
Having made up his tale of precious pearls,
Rejoins her in their hut upon the sands—
So dear to the pale Persians Rustum came.
And Rustum to the Persian front advanced,
And Sohrab arm'd in Haman's tent, and came.
And as afield the reapers cut a swath
Down through the middle of a rich man's corn,
And on each side are squares of standing corn,
And in the midst a stubble, short and bare—
So on each side were squares of men, with spears
Bristling, and in the midst, the open sand.
And Rustum came upon the sand, and cast
His eyes toward the Tartar tents, and saw
Sohrab come forth, and eyed him as he came.
  As some rich woman, on a winter's morn,
Eyes through her silken curtains the poor drudge
Who with numb blacken'd fingers makes her fire—
At cock-crow, on a starlit winter's morn,
When the frost flowers the whiten'd window-panes—
And wonders how she lives, and what the thoughts

Of that poor drudge may be; so Rustum eyed
The unknown adventurous Youth, who from afar
Came seeking Rustum, and defying forth
All the most valiant chiefs; long he perused
His spirited air, and wonder'd who he was.
For very young he seem'd, tenderly rear'd;
Like some young cypress, tall, and dark, and straight,
Which in a queen's secluded garden throws
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And a deep pity enter'd Rustum's soul
As he beheld him coming; and he stood,
And beckon'd to him with his hand, and said:
"O thou young man, the air of Heaven is soft,
And warm, and pleasant; but the grave is cold!
Heaven's air is better than the cold dead grave.
Behold me! I am vast, and clad in iron,
And tried: and I have stood on many a field
Of blood, and I have fought with many a foe—
Never was that field lost, or that foe saved.
O Sohrab, wherefore wilt thou rush on death?
Be govern'd! quit the Tartar host, and come
To Iran, and be as my son to me,
And fight beneath my banner till I die!
There are no youths in Iran brave as thou."
So he spake, mildly; Sohrab heard his voice,
The mighty voice of Rustum, and he saw
His giant figure planted on the sand,
Sole, like some single tower, which a chief
Hath builded on the waste in former years
Against the robbers; and he saw that head,
Streak'd with its first grey hairs, hope filled his soul,
And he ran forward and embraced his knees,
And clasp'd his hand within his own, and said:
"O, by thy father's head! by thine own soul!
Art thou not Rustum? speak! art thou not he?"

But Rustum eyed askance the kneeling youth,
And turn'd away, and spake to his own soul:
"Ah me, I muse what this young fox may mean!
False, wily, boastful, are these Tartar boys.
For if I now confess this thing he asks,
And hide it not, but say: *Rustum is here!*
He will not yield indeed, nor quit our foes,
But he will find some pretext not to fight,
And praise my fame, and proffer courteous gifts,
A belt or sword perhaps, and go his way.
And on a feast-tide, in Afrasiab's hall,
In Samarcand, he will arise and cry:
'I challenged once, when the two armies camp'd
Beside the Oxus, all the Persian lords
To cope with me in single fight; but they
Shrank, only Rustum dared; then he and I
Changed gifts, and went on equal terms away.'
So will he speak, perhaps, while men applaud;
Then were the chiefs of Iran shamed through me."
And then he turn'd, and sternly spake aloud:
"Rise! wherefore dost thou vainly question thus
Of Rustum? I am here, whom thou hast call'd
By challenge forth; make good thy vaunt, or yield!
Is it with Rustum only thou wouldst fight?
Rash boy, men look on Rustum's face and flee!
For well I know that did great Rustum stand
Before thy face this day, and were reveal'd,
There would be then no talk of fighting more.
But being what I am, I tell thee this—
Do thou record it in thine inmost soul:
Either thou shalt renounce thy vaunt and yield,
Or else thy bones shall strew this sand, till winds
Bleach them, or Oxus, with his summer-floods,
Oxus in summer wash them all away."
He spoke; and Sohrab answer'd, on his feet:
"Art thou so fierce? Thou wilt not fright me so!
I am no girl, to be made pale by words.

Yet this thou hast said well, did Rustum stand
Here on this field, there were no fighting then.
But Rustum is far hence, and we stand here.
Begin! thou art more vast, more dread than I,
And thou art proved, I know, and I am young—
But yet success sways with the breath of Heaven.
And though thou thinkest that thou knowest sure
Thy victory, yet thou canst not surely know.
For we are all, like swimmers in the sea,
Poised on the top of a huge wave of fate,
Which hangs uncertain to which side to fall.
And whether it will heave us up to land,
Or whether it will roll us out to sea,
Back out to sea, to the deep waves of death,
We know not, and no search will make us know;
Only the event will teach us in its hour."
He spoke, and Rustum answered not, but hurl'd
His spear; down from the shoulder, down it came,
As on some partridge in the corn a hawk,
That long has tower'd in the airy clouds,
Drops like a plummet; Sohrab saw it come,
And sprang aside, quick as a flash; the spear
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The iron plates rang sharp, but turn'd the spear.
And Rustum seized his club, which none but he
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Hyphasis or Hydaspes, when, high up
By their dark springs, the wind in winter-time
Hath made in Himalayan forests wrack,
And strewn the channels with torn boughs—so huge
The club which Rustum lifted now, and struck
One stroke; but again Sohrab sprang aside,
Lithe as the glancing snake, and the club came

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That long has tower'd in the airy clouds,
Drops like a plummet; Sohrab saw it come,
And sprang aside, quick as a flash; the spear
Hiss'd, and went quivering down into the sand,
Which it sent flying wide;—then Sohrab threw
In turn, and full struck Rustum's shield; sharp rang,
The iron plates rang sharp, but turn'd the spear.
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Thundering to earth, and leapt from Rustum's hand.
And Rustum follow'd his own blow, and fell
To his knees, and with his fingers clutched the sand;
And now might Sohrab have unsheathed his sword,
And pierced the mighty Rustum while he lay
Dizzy, and on his knees, and choked with sand;
But he look'd on, and smiled, nor bared his sword,
But courteously drew back, and spoke, and said:
"Thou strik'st too hard! that club of thine will float
Upon the summer floods, and not my bones.
But rise, and be not wroth! not wroth am I;
No, when I see thee, wrath forsakes my soul.
Thou say'st, thou art not Rustum; be it so!
Who art thou then, that canst so touch my soul?
Boy as I am, I have seen battles too—
Have waded foremost in their bloody waves,
And heard their hollow roar of dying men;
But never was my heart thus touch'd before.
Are they from Heaven, these softenings of the heart?
O thou old warrior, let us yield to Heaven!
Come, plant we here in earth our angry spears,
And make a truce, and sit upon this sand,
And pledge each other in red wine, like friends,
And thou shalt talk to me of Rustum's deeds.
There are enough foes in the Persian host,
Whom I may meet, and strike, and feel no pang;
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He left to lie, but had regain'd his spear,
Whose fiery point now in his mail'd right-hand
Blazed bright and baleful, like that autumn-star,
The baleful sign of fevers; dust had soil'd
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But on the Oxus sands, and in the dance
Of battle, and with me, who make no play
Of war; I fight it out, and hand to hand.
Speak not to me of truce, and pledge, and wine!
Remember all thy valour; try thy feints
And cunning! all the pity I had is gone;
Because thou hast shamed me before both the hosts
With thy light skipping tricks, and thy girl's wiles."
  He spoke, and Sohrab kindled at his taunts,
And he too drew his sword; at once they rush'd
Together, as two eagles on one prey
Come rushing down together from the clouds,
One from the east, one from the west; their shields
Dash'd with a clang together, and a din
Rose, such as that the sinewy wood-cutters
Make often in the forest's heart at morn,
Of hewing axes, crashing trees—such blows
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And you would say that sun and stars took part
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Grew suddenly in Heaven, and dark'd the sun
Over the fighters' heads; and a wind rose

For both the onlooking hosts on either hand
Stood in broad daylight, and the sky was pure,
And the sun sparkled on the Oxus stream.
But in the gloom they fought, with bloodshot eyes

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In gloom they twain were wrapp'd, and they alone;
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And labouring breath; first Rustum struck the shield
Which Sohrab held stiff out; the steel-spiked spear
Rent the tough plates, but fail'd to reach the skin,
And Rustum pluck'd it back with angry groan.
Then Sohrab with his sword smote Rustum's helm,
Nor clove its steel quite through; but all the crest
He shore away, and that proud horse-hair plume,
Never till now defiled, sank to the dust;
And Rustum bow'd his head; but then the gloom
Grew blacker, thunder rumbled in the air,
And lightnings rent the cloud; and Ruksh, the horse,
Who stood at hand, utter'd a dreadful cry;—
No horse's cry was that, most like the roar
Of some pain'd desert-lion, who all day
Has trail'd the hunter's javelin in his side,
And comes at night to die upon the sand—
The two hosts heard that cry, and quaked for fear,
And Oxus curdled as it cross'd his stream.
But Sohrab heard, and quail'd not, but rush'd on.
And struck again; and again Rustum bow'd
His head; but this time all the blade, like glass,
Sprang in a thousand shivers on the helm,
And in the hand the hilt remain'd alone.
Then Rustum raised his head; his dreadful eyes
Glared, and he shook on high his menacing spear,
And shouted: *Rustum!*—Sohrab heard that shout,
And shrank amazed: back he recoil'd one step,
And scanned with blinking eyes the advancing form;
And then he stood bewilder'd, and he dropp'd
His covering shield, and the spear pierced his side.
He reel'd, and staggering back, sank to the ground;
And then the gloom dispersed, and the wind fell,
And the bright sun broke forth, and melted all
The cloud; and the two armies saw the pair;—
Saw Rustum standing, safe upon his feet,
And Sohrab, wounded, on the bloody sand.
  Then, with a bitter smile, Rustum began:

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Or else that the great Rustum would come down
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Than to thy friends, and to thy father old."
  And, with a fearless mien, Sohrab replied:
"Unknown thou art; yet thy fierce vaunt is vain.
Thou dost not slay me, proud and boastful man!
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[illegible]
They should be lying here, I standing there.
But that beloved name unnerved my arm—
That name, and something, I confess, in thee,
Which troubles all my heart, and made my shield
Fall; and thy spear transfix'd an unarm'd foe.
And now thou boastest, and insult'st my fate.
But hear thou this, fierce man, tremble to hear;
The mighty Rustum shall avenge my death!
My father, whom I seek through all the world,
He shall avenge my death, and punish thee!"
  As when some hunter in the spring hath found
A breeding eagle sitting on her nest,
Upon the craggy isle of a hill-lake,
And pierced her with an arrow as she rose,
And follow'd her to find her where she fell
Far off;—anon her mate comes winging back
From hunting, and a great way off descries
His huddling young left sole; at that, he checks
His pinion, and with short uneasy sweeps

Circles above his eyry, with loud screams
Chiding his mate back to her nest; but she
Lies dying, with the arrow in her side,
In some far stony gorge out of his ken,
A heap of fluttering feathers—never more
Shall the lake glass her, flying over it;
Never the black and dripping precipices
Echo her stormy scream as she sails by—
As that poor bird flies home, nor knows his loss,
So Rustum knew not his own loss, but stood
Over his dying son, and knew him not.
  And with a cold, incredulous voice, he said:
"What prate is this of fathers and revenge?
The mighty Rustum never had a son."
  And, with a failing voice, Sohrab replied:
"Ah yes, he had! and that lost son am I.
Surely the news will one day reach his ear,
Reach Rustum, where he sits, and tarries long,
Somewhere, I know not where, but far from here;
And pierce him like a stab, and make him leap
To arms, and cry for vengeance upon thee.
Fierce man, bethink thee, for an only son!
What will that grief, what will that vengeance be?
Oh, could I live till I that grief have seen!
Yet him I pity not so much, but her,
My mother, who in Ader-baijan dwells
With that old king, her father, who grows grey
With age, and rules over the valiant Koords.
Her most I pity, who no more will see
Sohrab returning from the Tartar camp,
With spoils and honour, when the war is done.
But a dark rumour will be bruited up,
From tribe to tribe, until it reach her ear;
And then will that defenceless woman learn
That Sohrab will rejoice her sight no more
But that in battle with a nameless foe,
By the far-distant Oxus, he is slain."

He spoke; and as he ceased, he wept aloud,
Thinking of her he left, and his own death.
He spoke; but Rustum listen'd, plunged in thought.
Nor did he yet believe it was his son
Who spoke, although he call'd back names he knew;
For he had had sure tidings that the babe,
Which was in Ader-baijan born to him,
Had been a puny girl, no boy at all—
So that sad mother sent him word, for fear
Rustum should seek the boy, to train in arms.
And so he deem'd that either Sohrab took,
By a false boast, the style of Rustum's son;
Or that men gave it him, to swell his fame.
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At the full moon; tears gather'd in his eyes;
For he remember'd his own early youth
And all its bounding rapture; as, at dawn,
The shepherd from his mountain-lodge descries
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[illegible]
[illegible]
And that old king, her father, who loved well
His wandering guest, and gave him his fair child
With joy; and all the pleasant life they led,
They three, in that long-distant summer-time—
The castle, and the dewy woods, and hunt
And hound, and morn on those delightful hills
In Ader-baijan. And he saw that Youth,
Of age and looks to be his own dear son,
Piteous and lovely, lying on the sand,
Like some rich hyacinth which by the scythe
Of an unskilful gardener has been cut,
Mowing the garden grass-plots near its bed,
And lies, a fragrant tower of purple bloom,
On the mown, dying grass—so Sohrab lay,

Lovely in death, upon the common sand.
And Rustum gazed on him with grief, and said:
"Oh, Sohrab, thou indeed art such a son
Whom Rustum, wert thou his, might well have loved!
Yet thou errest, Sohrab, or else men
Have told thee false—thou art not Rustum's son.
For Rustum had no son; one child he had—
But one—a girl; who with her mother now
Plies some light female task, nor dreams of us—
Of us she dreams not, nor of wounds, nor war."
But Sohrab answer'd him in wrath; for now
The anguish of the deep-fix'd spear grew fierce,
And he desired to draw forth the steel,
And let the blood flow free, and so to die—
But first he would convince his stubborn foe;
And, rising sternly on one arm, he said:
"Man, who art thou who dost deny my words?
Truth sits upon the lips of dying men,
And falsehood, while I lived, was far from mine.
I tell thee, prick'd upon this arm I bear
That seal which Rustum to my mother gave,
That she might prick it on the babe she bore."
He spoke; and all the blood left Rustum's cheeks,
And his knees totter'd, and he smote his hand
Against his breast, his heavy mailèd hand,
That the hard iron corslet clank'd aloud;
And to his heart he press'd the other hand,
And in a hollow voice he spake, and said:
"Sohrab, that were a proof which could not lie!
If thou show this, then art thou Rustum's son."
Then, with weak hasty fingers, Sohrab loosed
His belt, and near the shoulder bared his arm,
And show'd a sign in faint vermilion points
Prick'd; as a cunning workman, in Pekin,
Pricks with vermilion some clear porcelain vase,
An emperor's gift—at early morn he paints,
And all day long, and, when night comes, the lamp

Lights up his studious forehead and thin hands—
So delicately prick'd the sign appear'd
On Sohrab's arm, the sign of Rustum's seal.
It was that griffin, which of old rear'd Zal,
Rustum's great father, whom they left to die,
A helpless babe, among the mountain rocks;
Him that kind creature found, and rear'd and loved—
Then Rustum took it for his glorious sign.
And Sohrab bared that image on his arm,
And himself scann'd it long with mournful eyes,
And then he touch'd it with his hand and said:
"How say'st thou? Is that sign the proper sign
Of Rustum's son, or of some other man's?"
He spoke; but Rustum gazed, and gazed, and stood
Speechless; and then he utter'd one sharp cry:
O boy—thy father!—and his voice choked there.
And then a dark cloud pass'd before his eyes,
And his head swam, and he sank down to earth.
But Sohrab crawl'd to where he lay, and cast
His arms about his neck, and kiss'd his lips,
And with fond faltering fingers stroked his cheeks,
Trying to call him back to life; and life
Came back to Rustum, and he oped his eyes,
And they stood wide with horror; and he seized
In both his hands the dust which lay around,
And threw it on his head, and smirch'd his hair,—
His hair, and face, and beard, and glittering arms;
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
But Sohrab saw his thought, and held his hands,
And with a soothing voice he spake, and said:
"Father, forbear! for I but meet to-day
The doom which at my birth was written down
In Heaven, and thou art Heaven's unconscious hand.
Surely my heart cried out that it was thou,
When first I saw thee; and thy heart spoke too,

I know it! but fate trod these promptings down
Under its iron heel; fate, fate engaged
The strife, and hurl'd me on my father's spear.
But let us speak no more of this! I find
My father; let me feel that I have found!
Come, sit beside me on this sand, and take
My head betwixt thy hands, and kiss my cheeks,
And wash them with thy tears, and say: *My son!*
Quick! quick! for numbered are my sands of life,
And swift; for like the lightning to this field
I came, and like the wind I go away—
Sudden, and swift, and like a passing wind;
But it was writ in Heaven that this should be."
  So said he, and his voice released the heart
Of Rustum, and his tears broke forth; he cast
His arms round his son's neck, and wept aloud,
And kiss'd him. And awe fell on both the hosts,
When they saw Rustum's grief; and Ruksh, the horse,
With his head bowing to the ground and mane
Sweeping the dust, came near, and in mute woe
First to the one then to the other moved
His head, as if inquiring what their grief
Might mean; and from his dark, compassionate eyes,
The big warm tears roll'd down, and caked the sand.
But Rustum chid him with stern voice, and said:
  "Ruksh, now thou grievest; but, O Ruksh, thy feet
Should then have rotted on their nimble joints,
When first they bore thy master to this field!"
  But Sohrab look'd upon the horse, and said:
"Is this, then, Ruksh? How often, in past days,
My mother told me of thee, thou brave steed,
My terrible father's terrible horse! and said,
That I should one day find thy lord and thee.
Come, let me lay my hand upon thy mane!
O Ruksh, thou art more fortunate than I;
For thou hast gone where I shall never go,
And snuff'd the breezes of my father's home.

[illegible] sands of Seistan,
[illegible] Lake
[illegible] flood,
[illegible]
[illegible]
Have never known my grandsire's furrow'd face,
Nor seen his lofty house in Seistan,
Nor slaked my thirst at the clear Helmund stream;
[illegible] father's [illegible], and seen
[illegible]
[illegible]
And the black Toorkmun tents; and only drunk
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
The yellow Oxus, by whose brink I die."
  Then, with a heavy groan, Rustum bewail'd:
"Oh that its waves were flowing over me!
Oh that I saw its grains of yellow silt
Roll tumbling in the current o'er my head!"
  But, with a grave mild voice, Sohrab replied:
"Desire not that, my father! thou must live.
For some are born to do great deeds, and live,
As some are born to be obscured, and die.
Do thou the deeds I die too young to do,
And reap a second glory in thine age;
Thou art my father, and thy gain is mine.
But come! thou seest this great host of men
Which follow me; I pray thee, slay not these!
Let me intreat for them; what have they done?
They follow'd me, my hope, my fame, my star.
Let them all cross the Oxus back in peace.
But me thou must bear hence, not send with them,
But carry me with thee to Seistan,
And place me on a bed, and mourn for me,
Thou, and the snow-hair'd Zal, and all thy friends.

And thou must lay me in that lovely earth,
And heap a stately mound above my bones,
And plant a far-seen pillar over all.
That so the passing horseman on the waste
May see my tomb a great way off, and say—
Sohrab, the mighty Rustum's son, lies there,
Whom his great father did in ignorance kill—
And I be not forgotten in my grave."
  And, with a mournful voice, Rustum replied:
"Fear not; as thou hast said, Sohrab, my son,
So shall it be; for I will burn my tents,
And quit the host, and bear thee hence with me,
And carry thee away to Seistan,
And place thee on a bed, and mourn for thee,
With the snow-headed Zal, and all my friends.
And I will lay thee in that lovely earth,
And heap a stately mound above thy bones,
And plant a far-seen pillar over all,
And men shall not forget thee in thy grave.
And I will spare thy host; yea, let them go!
Let them all cross the Oxus back in peace!
What shall I do with slaying any more?
For would that all whom I have ever slain
Might be once more alive; my bitterest foes,
And they who were call'd champions in their time,
And through whose death I won that fame I have—
And I were nothing but a common man,
A poor, mean soldier, and without renown,
So thou mightest live too, my son, my son!
Or rather would that I, even I myself,
Might now be lying on this bloody sand,
Near death, and by an ignorant stroke of thine,
Not thou of mine! and I might die, not thou;
And I, not thou, be borne to Seistan;
And Zal might weep above my grave, not thine;
And say: *O son, I weep thee not too sore,*
For willingly, I know, thou met'st thine end.—

But now in blood and battles was my youth,
And full of blood and battles is my age,
And I shall never end this life of blood."
  Then, at the point of death, Sohrab replied:
"A life of blood indeed, thou dreadful man!
But thou shalt yet have peace; only not now,
Not yet! but thou shalt have it on that day
When thou shalt sail in a high-masted ship,
Thou and the other peers of Kai Khosroo,
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
  He spoke; and Sohrab smiled on him, and took
The spear, and drew it from his side, and eased
His wound's imperious anguish; but the blood
Came welling from the open gash, and life
Flow'd with the stream;—all down his cold white side
The crimson torrent ran, dim now and soil'd,
Like the soil'd tissue of white violets,
Left, freshly gather'd, on their native bank,
By children whom their nurses call with haste
Indoors from the sun's eye; his head droop'd low,
His limbs grew slack; motionless, white, he lay—
White, with eyes closed; only when heavy gasps,
Deep heavy gasps quivering through all his frame,
Convulsed him back to life, he open'd them,
And fixed them feebly on his father's face;
Till now all strength was ebb'd, and from his limbs
Unwillingly the spirit fled away,
Regretting the warm mansion which it left,
And youth, and bloom, and this delightful world.
  So, on the bloody sand, Sohrab lay dead;
And the great Rustum drew his horseman's cloak
Down o'er his face, and sate by his dead son.
As those black granite pillars, once high-rear'd

By Jemshid in Persepolis, to bear
His house, now mid their broken flights of steps
Lie prone, enormous, down the mountain side—
So in the sand lay Rustum by his son.
  And night came down over the solemn waste,
And the two gazing hosts, and that sole pair,
And darken'd all; and a cold fog, with night,
Crept from the Oxus. Soon a hum arose,
As of a great assembly loosed, and fires
Began to twinkle through the fog; for now
Both armies moved to camp, and took their meal;
The Persians took it on the open sands
Southward, the Tartars by the river marge;
And Rustum and his son were left alone.
  But the majestic river floated on,
Out of the mist and hum of that low land,
Into the frosty starlight, and there moved,
Rejoicing, through the hush'd Chorasmian waste,
Under the solitary moon;—he flow'd
Right for the polar star, past Orgunjè,
Brimming, and bright, and large; then sands begin
To hem his watery march, and dam his streams,
And split his currents; that for many a league
The shorn and parcell'd Oxus strains along
Through beds of sand and matted rushy is[illegible]
Oxus, forgetting the bright speed he had
In his high mountain-cradle in Pamere,
A foil'd circuitous wanderer—till at last
The long'd-for dash of waves is heard, an[illegible]
His luminous home of waters opens, brig[illegible]
And tranquil, from whose floor the new-b[illegible]
Emerge, and shine upon the Aral Sea.

MATT[illegible]

THERE IS A HILL BESIDE THE SILVER THAMES

There is a hill beside the silver Thames,
Shady with birch and beech and odorous pine:
And brilliant underfoot with thousand gems
Steeply the thickets to his floods decline.
Straight trees in every place
Their thick tops interlace,
And pendant branches trail their foliage fine
Upon his watery face.

Swift from the sweltering pasturage he flows:
His stream, alert to seek the pleasant shade,
Pictures his gentle purpose, as he goes
Straight to the caverned pool his toil has made.
His winter floods lay bare
The stout roots in the air:
His summer streams are cool, when they have played
Among their fibrous hair.

A rushy island guards the sacred bower,
And hides it from the meadow, where in peace
The lazy cows wrench many a scented flower,
Robbing the golden market of the bees:
And laden barges float
By banks of myosote;
And scented flag and golden flower-de-lys
Delay the loitering boat.

And on this side the island, where the pool
Eddies away, are tangled mass on mass
The water-weeds, that net the fishes cool,
And scarce allow a narrow stream to pass;

Where spreading crowfoot mars
The drowning nenuphars,
Waving the tassels of her silken grass
Below her silver stars.

But in the purple pool there nothing grows,
Not the white water-lily spoked with gold;
Though best she loves the hollows, and well knows
On quiet streams her broad shields to unfold:
Yet should her roots but try
Within these deeps to lie,
Not her long-reaching stalk could ever hold
Her waxen head so high.

Sometimes an angler comes, and drops his hook
Within its hidden depths, and 'gainst a tree
Leaning his rod, reads in some pleasant book,
Forgetting soon his pride of fishery;
And dreams, or falls asleep,
While curious fishes peep
About his nibbled bait, or scornfully
Dart off and rise and leap.

And sometimes a slow figure 'neath the trees,
In ancient-fashioned smock, with tottering care
Upon a staff propping his weary knees,
May by the pathway of the forest fare:
As from a buried day
Across the mind will stray
Some perishing mute shadow,—and unaware
He passeth on his way.

Else, he that wishes solitude is safe,
Whether he bathe at morning in the stream:
Or lead his love there when the hot hours chafe
The meadows, busy with a blurring steam;

Or watch, as fades the light,
The gibbous moon grow bright,
Until her magic rays dance in a dream,
And glorify the night.

Where is this bower beside the silver Thames?
O pool and flowery thickets, hear my vow!
O trees of freshest foliage and straight stems,
No sharer of my secret I allow:
Lest ere I come the while
Strange feet your shades defile;
Or lest the burly oarsman turn his prow
Within your guardian isle.

ROBERT BRIDGES

THE CHILD AND THE MARINER

A [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
Their faith was never draped by Doubt: to them
Death was a rainbow in Eternity,
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
The wind for sailors' wives, and told what ships
Enjoyed fair weather, and what ships had storms;
He watched the sky, and he could tell for sure
What afternoons would follow stormy morns,
If quiet nights would end wild afternoons.
He leapt away from scandal with a roar,
And if a whisper still possessed his mind,
He walked about and cursed it for a plague.
He took offence at Heaven when beggars passed,
And sternly called them back to give them help.

In this old captain's house I lived, and things
That house contained were in ships' cabins once;
Sea-shells and charts and pebbles, model ships;
Green weeds, dried fishes stuffed, and coral stalks;
Old wooden trunks with handles of spliced rope,
With copper saucers full of monies strange,
That seemed the savings of dead men, not touched
To keep them warm since their real owners died;
Strings of red beads, methought were dipped in blood,
And swinging lamps, as though the house might move;
An ivory lighthouse built on ivory rocks,
The bones of fishes and three bottled ships.
And many a thing was there which sailors make
In idle hours, when on long voyages,
Of marvellous patience, to no lovely end.
And on those charts I saw the small black dots
That were called islands, and I knew they had
Turtles and palms, and pirates' buried gold.

There came a stranger to my grandad's house,
The old man's nephew, a seafarer too;
A big, strong able man who could have walked
Twm Barlum's hill all clad in iron mail;
So strong he could have made one man his club
To knock down others—Henry was his name,
No other name was uttered by his kin.
And here he was, in sooth ill-clad, but oh,
Thought I, what secrets of the sea are his!
This man knows coral islands in the sea,
And dusky girls heart-broken for white men;
This sailor knows of wondrous lands afar,
More rich than Spain, when the Phœnicians shipped
Silver for common ballast, and they saw
Horses at silver mangers eating grain;
This man has seen the wind blow up a mermaid's hair,
Which, like a golden serpent, reared and stretched
To feel the air away beyond her head.

THE CHILD AND [illegible]

He begged my pennies, which I gave [illegible]
He will most certainly [illegible]
A self-made king of some new [illegible]
Alas that he, the hero of my [illegible]
Should be his people's [illegible]
To proud command of ships, [illegible]
Before the mast for years, and [illegible]
Him they despised, and only [illegible]
A likeness in his face to show [illegible]
For he drank all his pay, [illegible]
As long as ale was easy got on [illegible]

Now, in his last long [illegible]
From Plymouth Sound to [illegible]
The Cingalese at work, and [illegible]
But came not near his [illegible]
He was not old, yet seemed so; [illegible]
Looked like the drowned man's [illegible]
Has struck the wooden [illegible]
And all his flesh was [illegible]
His body marked as [illegible]
As dead men struck by [illegible]
And pictured with fine [illegible]
Chains on his neck and [illegible]
Rings on his fingers, [illegible]
And on his breast the [illegible]
Was schooner rigged, and [illegible]
He could not whisper [illegible]
No more than could a [illegible]
He laughed to scorn [illegible]
For fear of wind, [illegible]
Like Indian corn [illegible]
He knew no flowers [illegible]
He knew no birds [illegible]
Full well he knew [illegible]
A grander music [illegible]
When organ shakes a [illegible]

The sea his home, though it was always roused
By such wild storms as never leave Cape Horn;
Happy to hear the tempest grunt and squeal
Like pigs heard dying in a slaughter-house.
A true-born mariner, and this his hope—
His coffin would be what his cradle was,
A boat to drown in and be sunk at sea;
To drown at sea and lie a dainty corpse
Salted and iced in Neptune's larder deep.
This man despised small coasters, fishing-smacks,
He scorned those sailors who at night and morn
Can see the coast, when in their little boats
They go a six days' voyage and are back
Home with their wives for every Sabbath day.
Much did he talk of tankards of old beer,
And bottled stuff he drank in other lands,
Which was a liquid fire like Hell to gulp,
And Paradise to sip.
And so he talked;
Nor did those people listen with more awe
To Lazarus—whom they had seen stone-dead—
Than did we urchins to that seaman's voice.
He many a tale of wonder told: of where,
At Argostoli, Cephalonia's sea
Ran over the earth's lip in heavy floods;
And then again of how the strange Chinese
Conversed much as our homely Blackbirds sing.
He told us how he sailed in one old ship
Near that volcano Martinique, whose power
Shook like dry leaves the whole Caribbean seas;
And made the Sun set in a sea of fire
Which only half was his; and dust was thick
On deck, and stones were pelted at the mast.
So, as we walked along, that seaman dropped
Into my greedy ears such words that sleep
Stood at my pillow half the night perplexed.
He told how isles sprang up and sank again,

Between short voyages, to his amaze;
How they did come and go, and cheated charts;
Told how a crew was cursed when one man killed
A bird that perched upon a moving barque;

Under her dripping keel.
Oh, it was sweet
To hear that seaman tell such wondrous tales:
How deep the sea in parts, that drownèd men
Must go a long way to their graves and sink
Day after day, and wander with the tides.
He spake of his own deeds; of how he sailed
One summer's night along the Bosphorus,
And he—who knew no music like the wash
Of waves against a ship, or wind in shrouds—
Heard then the music on that woody shore
Of nightingales, and feared to leave the deck,
He thought 'twas sailing into Paradise.

To hear these stories all we urchins placed
Our pennies in that seaman's ready hand;
Until one morn he signed for a long cruise,
And sailed away—we never saw him more.
Could such a man sink in the sea unknown?
Nay, he had found a land with something rich,
That kept his eyes turned inland for his life.
" A damn' bad sailor and a landshark too,
No good in port or out "—my grandad said.

W. H. Davies

THE LAST COACHLOAD

TO COLIN

Crashed through the woods that lumbering Coach. The dust
Of flinted roads bepowdering felloe and hood.
Its gay paint cracked, its axles red with rust,
It lunged, lurched, toppled through a solitude

Of whispering boughs, and feathery, nid-nod grass.
Plodded the fetlocked horses. Glum and mum,
Its ancient Coachman recked not where he was,
Nor into what strange haunt his wheels were come.

[illegible] on;
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

But now—a verdurous height with eve-shade sweet;
Far, far to West the Delectable Mountains glowed.
Above, Night's canopy; at the horses' feet
A sea-like honied waste of flowers flowed.

There fell a pause of utter quiet. And—
Out from one murky window glanced an eye,
Stole from the other a lean, groping hand,
The padded door swung open with a sigh.

And—*Exeunt Omnes!* None to ask the fare—
A myriad human Odds in a last release
Leap out incontinent, snuff the incensed air;
A myriad parched-up voices whisper, "Peace."

On, on, and on—a stream, a flood, they flow.
O wondrous vale of jocund buds and bells!
Like vanishing smoke the rainbow legions glow,
Yet still the enravished concourse sweeps and swells.

All journeying done. Rest now from lash and spur—
Laughing and weeping, shoulder and elbow—'twould seem
That Coach capacious all Infinity were,
And these the fabulous figments of a dream.

Mad for escape; frenzied each breathless mote,
Lest rouse the Old Enemy from his death-still swoon,
Lest crack that whip again—they fly, they float,
Scamper, breathe—"Paradise!" abscond, are gone. . . .

WALTER DE LA MARE

THE HARE

My hands were hot upon a hare,
Half-strangled, struggling in a snare.
My knuckles at her warm windpipe—
When suddenly her eyes shot back,
Startled and staring, big and black,
And, ere I knew, my grip was slack
And I was clutching empty air,
Half-mad, half-glad at my lost luck . . .
When I awaked beside the stack.

'Twas just the moment when the snipe,
As though clock-wakened on the stroke,
An hour ere dawn, dart in and out,
Mist-wreaths in every syke asoak,
And flutter wheeling round about
And drumming out the summer night.
I lay star-gazing yet a bit,
Then, chilly-skinned, I sat upright
To shrug the shivers from my back,
And, drawing out a straw to suck,
My teeth nipped through it at a bite. . . .
The liveliest lad is out of pluck
An hour ere dawn—a tame cock-sparrow,
When cold stars shiver through his marrc
And wet mist soaks his mother-wit.

But as the snipe dropped one by one,
And one by one the stars blinked out,
I knew 'twould only need the sun
To send the shudders right-about;
And, as the clear East faded white,
I watched and wearied for the sun—
The jolly, welcome, friendly sun,

The sleepy sluggard of a sun
That still kept snoozing out of sight,
Though well he knew the night was done. . . .
And after all he caught me dozing,
And leapt up laughing in the sky
Just as my lazy eyes were closing;
And it was good as gold to lie
Full-length among the straw and feel
The day wax warmer every minute
As, glowing glad from head to heel,
I soaked and rolled rejoicing in it. . . .
When from the corner of my eye
Upon a heathery knowe hard-by,
With long lugs cocked and eyes astare,
Yet, all serene, I saw a hare.

Upon my belly in the straw
I lay and watched her sleek her fur
As, daintily, with well-licked paw,
She washed her face and neck and ears;
Then clean and comely in the sun
She kicked her heels up full of fun,
As if she didn't care a pin
Though she should jump out of her skin,
And leapt and lolloped free of fears,
Until my heart frisked round with her.
And yet if I but lift my head
You'll scamper off, young Puss, I said.
Still I can't lie and watch you play,
Upon my belly, half the day.
The Lord alone knows where I'm going,
But I had best be getting there.
Last night I loosed you from the snare—
Asleep or waking, who's for knowing?—
So I will thank you now for showing
Which art to take to bring me where
My luck awaits me. When you're ready

To start I'll follow on your track.
Though slow of foot, I'm sure and steady. . . .
She pricked her ears, then set them back,
And like a shot was out of sight;
And with a happy heart and light
As quickly I was on my feet
And following the way she went
Across the heather and the bent,
Across the quaking moss and peat.
Of course I lost her soon enough,
For moorland tracks are steep and rough,
And hares are made of nimbler stuff
Than any lad of seventeen,
However lanky-legged and tough,
However kestrel-eyed and keen:
And I'd at last to stop and eat
The little bit of bread and meat
Left in my pocket overnight.
So in a hollow snug and green
I sat beside a burn and dipped
The dry bread in an icy pool,
And munched a breakfast fresh and cool. . . .
And then sat gaping like a fool . . .
For, right before my very eyes,
With lugs acock and eyes astare,
I saw again the selfsame hare.

So up I jumped and off she slipped,
And I kept sight of her until
I stumbled in a hole and tripped
And came a heavy headlong spill:
And she, ere I'd the wit to rise,
Was o'er the hill and out of sight;
And sore and shaken with the tumbling,
And sicker at my foot for stumbling,
I cursed my luck and went on, grumbling,
The way her flying heels had fled.

The sky was cloudless overhead
And just alive with larks asinging;
And in a twinkling I was swinging
Across the windy hills, lighthearted.
A kestrel at my footstep started,
Just pouncing on a frightened mouse,
And hung o'erhead with wings ahover;
Through rustling heath an adder darted;
A hundred rabbits bobbed to cover;
A weasel, sleek and rusty red,
Popped out of sight as quick as winking;
I saw a grizzled vixen slinking
Behind a clucking brood of grouse
That rose and cackled at my coming;
And all about my way were flying
The peewit with their slow wings creaking;
And little grey snipe darted drumming;
And now and then a golden plover
Or redshank piped with reedy whistle:
But never shaken bent or thistle
Betrayed the quarry I was seeking,
And not an instant anywhere
Did I clap eyes upon a hare.

So travelling still the twilight caught me,
And as I stumbled on I muttered:
A deal of luck the hare has brought me!
[illegible]

[illegible]

The hare just bolting twixt my feet.
She slipped my clutch, and I stood there
And cursed that devil-littered hare
That left me stranded in the dark
In that wide waste of quaggy peat

Beneath black night without a spark;
When, looking up, I saw a flare
Upon a far-off hill and said:
By God, the heather is afire!
It's mischief at this time of year. . . .
And then, as one bright flame shot higher,
And booths and vans stood out quite clear,
My wits came back into my head,
And I remembered Brough Hill Fair:

And as I stumbled towards the glare
I knew the sudden kindling meant
The Fair was over for the day,
And all the cattle folk away,
And gipsy folk and tinkers now
Were lighting supper-fires without
Each caravan and booth and tent.
And as I climbed the stiff hill-brow
I quite forgot my lucky hare.
I'd something else to think about;
For well I knew there's broken meat
For empty bellies after fair-time,
And looked to have a royal rare time,
With something rich and prime to eat,
And then to lie and toast my feet
All night beside the biggest fire.

But even as I neared the first
A pleasant whiff of stewing burst
From out a steaming pot abubble;
And as I stopped behind the folk
Who sprawled around and watched it seething,
A woman heard my eager breathing
And, turning, caught my hungry eye,
And called out to me: *Draw in nigher,*
Unless you find it too much trouble,
Or you've a nose for better fare

And go to supper with the Squire—
You've got the hungry parson's air!
And all looked up and took the joke,
As I dropped gladly to the ground
Among them where they all lay gazing
Upon the bubbling and the blazing.
My eyes were dazzled by the fire
At first, and then I glanced around,
And in those swarthy fire-lit faces—
Though drowsing in the glare and heat
And snuffing the warm savour in,
Dead certain of their fill of meat—
I felt the bit between the teeth,
The flying heels, the broken traces,
And heard the high-road ring beneath
The trampling hoofs, and knew them kin.
Then for the first time, standing there,
Behind the woman who had hailed me,
I saw a girl with eyes astare
That looked in terror o'er my head—
And all at once my courage failed me . . .
For now again, and sore adread,
My hands were hot upon a hare
That struggled, strangling in a snare . . .
Then once more, as the girl stood clear
Before me, quaking cold with fear,
I saw the hare look from her eyes.

And when at last I turned to see
What held her scared, I saw a man,
A fat man with dull eyes aleer,
Within the shadow of the van;
And I was on the point to rise
To send him [illegible]s,
[illegible]
[illegible]
And would have done it in a tick;

When, suddenly alive with fright,
She started with red parted lips,
As though she guessed we'd come to grips,
And turned her black eyes full on me. . . .
And as I looked into their light
My heart forgot the lust of fight,
And something shot me to the quick
And ran like wildfire through my blood,
And tingled to my finger-tips—
And in a dazzling flash I knew
I'd never been alive before . . .
And she was mine for evermore.

While all the others slept asnore
In caravan and tent that night,
I lay alone beside the fire
And stared into the blazing core,
With eyes that would not shut or tire,
Because the best of all was true,
And they looked still into the light
Of her eyes, burning ever bright
Within the brightest coal for me. . . .
Once more I saw her, as she started
And glanced at me with red lips parted;
And as she looked, the frightened hare
Had fled her eyes, and merrily
She smiled with fine teeth flashing white,
As though she too were happy-hearted. . . .
Then she had trembled suddenly
And dropped her eyes, as that fat man
Stepped from the shadow of the van
And joined the circle as the pot
Was lifted off and, piping hot,
The supper steamed in wooden bowls.
Yet she had hardly touched a bite,
And never raised her eyes all night
To mine again, but on the coals,

As I sat staring, she had stared—
The black curls shining round her head
From under the red kerchief tied
So nattily beneath her chin:
And she had stolen off to bed
Quite early, looking dazed and scared.
Then, all agape and sleepy-eyed,
Ere long the others had turned in;
And I was rid of that fat man
Who slouched away to his own van.

And now before the van I lay,
With sleepless eyes awaiting day,
And as I gazed into the glare
I heard behind a gentle stir,
And, turning round, I looked on her
Where she stood on the little stair
Outside the van with listening air—
And in her eyes the hunted hare. . . .
And then I saw her slip away,
A bundle underneath her arm,
Without a single glance at me.
I lay a moment wondering,
My heart athump like anything,
Then, fearing she should come to harm,
I rose and followed speedily
Where she had vanished in the night.
And as she heard my step behind,
She started and stopped dead with fright,
Then blundered on as if struck blind:
And now as I caught up with her,
Just as she took the moorland track,
I saw the hare's eyes big and black . . .
She made as though she'd double back . . .
But, when she looked into my eyes,
She stood quite still and did not stir . . .
And picking up her fallen pack

I tucked it 'neath my arm, and she
Just took her luck quite quietly
As she must take what chance might come
And would not have it otherwise,
And walked into the night with me
Without a word across the fells.

And all about us through the night
The mists were stealing, cold and white,
Down every rushy syke and slack:
But soon the moon swung into sight,
And as we went my heart was light
And singing like a burn in flood,
And in my ears were tinkling bells;
My body was a rattled drum,
And fifes were shrilling through my blood
That summer night to think that she
Was walking through the world with me.

But when the air with dawn was chill,
As we were travelling down a hill
She broke the silence with low sobbing,
And told her tale, her bosom throbbing
As though her very heart was shaken
With fear she'd yet be overtaken. . . .
She'd always lived in caravans—
Her father's gay as any man's,
Grass-green picked out with red and yellow
And glittering brave with burnished brass
That sparkled in the sun like flame,
And window-curtains white as snow. . . .
But they had died ten years ago,
Her parents both, when fever came;
And they were buried side by side,
Somewhere beneath the wayside grass . . .
In times of sickness they kept wide
Of towns and busybodies, so

No parson's or policeman's tricks
Should bother them when in a fix . . .
Her father never could abide
A black coat or a blue, poor man. . . .
And so Long Dick, a kindly fellow
When you could keep him from the can,
And Meg, his easygoing wife,
Had taken her into their van
And kept her since her parents died. . . .
And she had lived a happy life
Until Fat Pete's young wife was taken . . .
But, ever since, he'd pestered her . . .
And she dared scarcely breathe or stir
Lest she should see his eyes aleer. . . .
And many a night she'd lain and shaken,
And very nearly died of fear,
Though safe enough within the van
With Mother Meg and her good man;
For, since Fat Pete was Long Dick's friend,
And they were thick and sweet as honey,
And Dick owed Pete a pot of money,
She knew too well how it must end . . .
And she would rather lie stone-dead
Beneath the wayside grass than wed
With leering Pete, and live the life,
And die the death of his first wife. . . .
And so last night clean-daft with dread
She'd bundled up a pack and fled. . . .

When all the sobbing tale was out
She dried her eyes and looked about
As though she'd left all fear behind,
And out of sight were out of mind.
Then when the dawn was burning red,
I'm hungry as a hawk! she said,
And from the bundle took out bread:
And at the happy end of night

We sat together by a burn
And eat a thick slice turn by turn,
And laughed and kissed between each bite.

Then up again and on our way
We went and tramped the livelong day
The moorland trackways steep and rough,
Though there was little fear enough
That they would follow on our flight.

And then again a shiny night
Among the honey-scented heather,
We wandered in the moonblaze bright
Together through a land of light,
A lad and lass alone with life:
And merrily we laughed together
When, starting up from sleep, we heard
The cock-grouse talking to his wife—
And *Old Fat Pete* she called the bird.

Six months and more have cantered by,
And, winter past, we're out again—
We've left the fat and weatherwise
To keep their coops and reeking sties
And eat their fill of oven-pies,
While we win free and out again
To take potluck beneath the sky
With sun and moon and wind and rain:
Six happy months . . . and yet at night
I've often wakened in affright
And looked upon her lying there
Beside me sleeping quietly,
Adread that when she waked I'd see
The hunted hare within her eyes.

And only last night as I slept
Beneath the shelter of a stack . . .

THE HARE

My hands were hot upon a hare,
Half-strangled, struggling in the snare,
When suddenly her eyes shot back,
Startled and startling, big and black,
And, ere I knew, my grip was slack
And I was clutching empty air. . . .
Bolt-upright from my sleep I leapt . . .
Her place was empty in the straw . . .
And then with quaking heart I saw
That she was standing in the night,
A leveret cuddled to her breast. . . .
I spoke no word, but as the light
Through banks of Eastern cloud was breaking,
She turned and saw that I was waking,
And told me how she couldn't rest
And, rising in the night, she'd found
This baby hare crouched on the ground,
And she had nursed it quite a while,
But now she'd better let it go . . .
Its mother would be fretting so . . .
A mother's heart . . .
                                        I saw her smile

And look at me with tender eyes;
And as I looked into their light
My foolish, fearful heart grew wise. . . .
And now I know that never there
I'd see again the startled hare
Or need to dread the shades of night.

WILFRID GIB

THE BARREL-ORGAN

THERE'S a barrel-organ carolling across a golden street
  In the City as the sun sinks low;
With a silvery cry of linnets in its dull mechanic beat,
  As it dies into the sunset-glow;
And it pulses through the pleasures of the City and the pain
  That surround the singing organ like a large eternal light;
And they've given it a glory and a part to play again
  In the Symphony that rules the day and night.

And now it's marching onward through the realms of old romance,
  And trolling out a fond familiar tune,
And now it's roaring cannon down to fight the King of France,
  And now it's prattling softly to the moon,
And all around the organ there's a sea without a shore
  Of human joys and wonders and regrets;
To remember and to recompense the music evermore
  For what the cold machinery forgets. . . .

Yes: as the music changes,
  Like a prismatic glass,
It takes the light and ranges
  Through all the moods that pass;
Dissects the common carnival
  Of passions and regrets,
And gives the world a glimpse of all
  The colour it forgets.

And there *La Traviata* sighs
  Another sadder song;
And there *Il Trovatore* cries
  A tale of deeper wrong;

And bolder knights to battle go
With sword and shield and lance,
Than ever here on earth below
Have whirled into—*a dance!*—

Go down to Kew in lilac-time, in lilac-time, in lilac-time,
Go down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London!)
And you shall wander hand in hand with love in summer's wonderland.
Go down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London!)

The cherry-trees are seas of bloom and soft perfume and sweet perfume,
The cherry-trees are seas of bloom (and oh, so near to London!)
And there they say, when dawn is high and all the world's a blaze of sky,
The cuckoo, though he's very shy, will sing a song for London.

The Dorian nightingale is rare, and yet they say you'll hear him there
At Kew, at Kew in lilac-time (and oh, so near to London!)
The linnet and the throstle, too, and after dark the long halloo
And golden-eyed *tu-whit tu-whoo*, of owls that ogle London.

For Noah hardly knew a bird of any kind that isn't heard
At Kew, at Kew in lilac-time (and oh, so near to London!)
And when the rose begins to pout and all the chestnut spires are out
You'll hear the rest without a doubt, all chorusing for London:

Come down to Kew in lilac-time, in lilac-time, in lilac-time;
Come down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London!)
And you shall wander hand in hand with love in summer's wonderland;
Come down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London!)

And then the troubadour begins to thrill the golden street,
  In the City as the sun sinks low;
And in all the gaudy buses there are scores of weary feet
Marking time, sweet time, with a dull mechanic beat,
And a thousand hearts are plunging to a love they'll nev
    meet,
Through the meadows of the sunset, through the poppi
    and the wheat,
  In the land where the dead dreams go.

. . . .

So it's Jeremiah, Jeremiah,
  What have *you* to say
When you meet the garland girls
  Tripping on their way?

All around my gala hat
  I wear a wreath of roses
(A long and lonely year it is
  I've waited for the May!)
If anyone should ask you,
  The reason why I wear it is—
My own true love, my true love is coming home to-day.

And it's buy a bunch of violets for the lady
  (*It's lilac-time in London! It's lilac-time in London!*)
Buy a bunch of violets for the lady
  While the sky burns blue above.

On the other side of the street you'll find it shady
  (*It's lilac-time in London! It's lilac-time in London!*)
Buy a bunch of violets for the lady,
  And tell her she's your own true love.

There's a barrel-organ carolling across a golden street
  In the City as the sun sinks glittering and slow;
And the music's not immortal; but the world has made it
    sweet

nd enriched it with the harmonies that make a song complete
n the deeper heavens of music where the night and morning meet,
As it dies into the sunset-glow;
And it pulses through the pleasures of the City and the pain
That surround the singing organ like a large eternal light,
And they've given it a glory and a part to play again
In the Symphony that rules the day and night.

And there, as the music changes,
The song runs round again.
Once more it turns and ranges
Through all its joy and pain,
Dissects the common carnival
Of passions and regrets;
And the wheeling world remembers all
The wheeling song forgets.

Once more *La Traviata* sighs
Another sadder song.
Once more *Il Trovatore* cries
A tale of deeper wrong.
Once more the knights to battle go
With sword and shield and lance,
Till once, once more, the shattered foe
Has whirled into—*a dance!*

Come down to Kew in lilac-time, in lilac-time, in lilac-time.
Come down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London!)
And you shall wander hand in hand with love in summer's wonde-land.
Come down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London!)

ALFRED NOYE

THE FISH

In a cool curving world he lies
And ripples with dark ecstasies.
The kind luxurious lapse and steal
Shapes all his universe to feel
And know and be; the clinging stream
Closes his memory, glooms his dream,
Who lips the roots o' the shore, and glides
Superb on unreturning tides.
Those silent waters weave for him
A fluctuant mutable world and dim,
Where wavering masses bulge and gape
Mysterious, and shape to shape
Dies momently through whorl and hollow,
And form and line and solid follow
Solid and line and form to dream
Fantastic down the eternal stream;
An obscure world, a shifting world,
Bulbous, or pulled to thin, or curled,
Or serpentine, or driving arrows,
Or serene slidings, or March narrows.
There slipping wave and shore are one,
And weed and mud. No ray of sun,
But glow to glow fades down the deep
(As dream to unknown dream in sleep);
Shaken translucency illumes
The hyaline of drifting glooms;
The strange soft-handed depth subdues
Drowned colour there, but black to hues,
As death to living, decomposes—
Red darkness of the heart of roses,
Blue brilliant from dead starless skies,
And gold that lies behind the eyes,
The unknown unnameable sightless white
That is the essential flame of night,

Lustreless purple, hooded green,
The myriad hues that lie between
Darkness and Darkness! . . .
And all's one,
Gentle, embracing, quiet, dun,
The world he rests in, world he knows,
Perpetual curving. Only—grows
An eddy in that ordered falling,
A knowledge from the gloom, a calling
Weed in the wave, gleam in the mud—
The dark fire leaps along his blood;
Dateless and deathless, blind and still,
The intricate impulse works its will;
His woven world drops back; and he,
Sans providence, sans memory,
Unconscious and directly driven,
Fades to some dank sufficient heaven.

O world of lips, O world of laughter,
Where hope is fleet and thought flies after,
Of lights in the clear night, of cries
That drift along the wave and rise
Thin to the glittering stars above,
You know the hands, the eyes of love!
The strife of limbs, the sightless clinging,
The infinite distance, and the singing
Blown by the wind, a flame of sound,
The gleam, the flowers, and vast around
The horizon, and the heights above—
You know the sigh, the song of love!

But there the night is close, and there
Darkness is cold and strange and bare;
And the secret deeps are whisperless;
And rhythm is all deliciousness;
And joy is in the throbbing tide,
Whose intricate fingers beat and glide

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Darkness is cold and strange and bare;
And the secret deeps are whisperless;
And rhythm is all deliciousness;
And joy is in the throbbing tide,
Whose intricate fingers beat and glide

In felt bewildering harmonies
Of trembling touch; and music is
The exquisite knocking of the blood.
Space is no more, under the mud;
His bliss is older than the sun.
Silent and straight the waters run.
The lights, the cries, the willows dim,
And the dark tide are one with him.

RUPERT BROOKE

NOTES AND EXERCISES



NOTES AND EXERCISES

PROTHALAMION

EDMUND SPENSER (1552?–99)

This poem commemorates those days preceding a wedding, for it cannot strictly be called a wedding-song. Spenser calls it "a Spousall verse." It shows both his love of beauty and the beauty of love. Written in honour of the Ladies Elizabeth and Katharine Somerset, it has melody and that remarkable sense of beauty found in all Spenser's [illegible] he tells us that he was born "in merry London. [illegible] "like a wounded snake, drags its slow length along."

NOTES

16. *paramours*, lovers.
26. *flasket*, a large basket. The word is still used in Devonshire.
27. *feateously*, neatly.
55. *eftsoons*, soon after, immediately. *Cf. Ancient Mariner*, line 12.
78. *Peneus*, a river rising in Thessaly.
79. *Tempe* was the shore.
121. *shend*, shame, outshine.
137. The home of the Earl of Leicester, with whom Spenser had lived.
146. *The Earl* of Essex, who led an expedition against Spain in 1596.
148. The Straits of Gibraltar
174. *baldric*, belt.

EXERCISES

1. What details of Spenser's life are given in *Prothalamion*?
2. Select from the poem (*a*) three examples of beauty of expression, (*b*) three 'pictures.'
3. Why has *Prothalamion* retained a place in our literature?

LYCIDAS

JOHN MILTON (1608–74)

Milton wrote this elegy for a Cambridge collection of thirty-six poems in memory of Edward King, a promising poet and a fellow-student at Cambridge. It is a pastoral elegy, in which the poet speaks as a shepherd. *Lycidas* is not marked by any deep sense of personal loss, but shows the poet's regret at the loss of a young man who might later have been of much value to poetry.

There are many romantic lines in this pastoral poem, as well as an exposure of the ills of the time, particularly in regard to the clergy. Lycidas, Milton reflects, is not dead, for he was a true son who lived a goodly life. This triumph over death is "steeped in romantic beauty." Tennyson said "*Lycidas* is a touchstone of poetic taste."

"Strict pastoral was first written or perfected by the Dorian Greeks settled in Sicily. . . . The metrical structure of this glorious elegy is partly derived from Italian models" (Palgrave).

NOTES

9. *peer*, equal.

20. *destined urn*, destiny.

33. *oaten flute*, reed pipe referred to in pastoral poetry.

40. *gadding*, wandering.

54. *Mona*, Anglesea.

55. *Deva*, river Dee. King was drowned off the Welsh coast.

58. *Muse herself*, Calliope, the Muse of epic poetry. She was the mother of Orpheus, who was torn to pieces by the Thracian women. His head and his lyre were washed ashore at Lesbos.

63. *Hebrus*, the river in Thrace where Orpheus met his death.

68–69. Names of shepherdesses.

88. *my oat*, pastoral poetry.

89. *herald of the sea*, Triton, who, at Neptune's command, blew a horn to still the sea.

96. *Hippotades*, Æolus, son of Hippotes, the ruler of the winds.

99. *Panope*, daughter of Nereus. The Nereids dwelt in the Mediterranean Sea.

101. A ship built during an eclipse was said to be ill-fated.

103. *Camus*, genius of the Cam.

109. A reference to St Peter.

111. *amain*, with force.

124. *scrannel*, lean.

128. *grim wolf*, the Church of Rome.

130. This may mean the executioner's axe.

132. *Alpheus*, the river-god.
138. *swart star*. Sirius, the dog-star, was held to be the cause of heat, thus making people swarthy or brown.
142. *rathe*, early.
149. *amaranthus*, a plant whose flowers last long without fading.
151. *laureat hearse*, the poet's grave.
160. *Bellerus*, a fabled Cornish giant.
161. St Michael's Mount was guarded by an angel.
162. In Northern Spain.
183. A drowned person was supposed to become the guardian spirit of the shore near which he was drowned.
189. *Doric lay*. Theocritus, Bion, and Moschus wrote in the Doric dialect.

Exercises

1. "*Lycidas* is the loveliest elegy in our language." Discuss this statement.
2. What does Milton say about the clergy in this poem?
3. Which elegy do you prefer, *Lycidas* or *Adonais*? Why?
4. "*Lycidas* is a touchstone of poetic taste." What did Tennyson mean by that? Is the statement justified?
5. Give examples of melody and of harshness in this poem.
6. How do the classical references help the poem?

L'ALLEGRO AND IL PENSEROSO

JOHN MILTON (1608–74)

These two poems are studies of the same man in different moods, and thus are parallel poems. *L'Allegro* ("*The Cheerful Man*") moves with more rapidity than *Il Penseroso* ("*The Thoughtful Man*") does. Each poem records the [illegible] of [illegible] [illegible] ... our language." There is a purity about Milton's pleasures, and their intellectual nature is typical of his Puritanic ideals. As is seen from Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, it was a custom of his time to analyse melancholy.

The metre, except for the opening lines, is the eight-syllabled couplet, with a normal scheme of four iambs.

L'Allegro

Notes

2. *Cerberus*, a dog with three heads. He dwelt on the river Styx and guarded the gates of Hades.

12. *yclep'd*, named.
Euphrosyne, "the light-hearted one," one of the three Graces.

16. *Bacchus*, the god of wine, to whom ivy was sacred.

24. *buxom*, lively.
debonair, elegant.

27. *wanton wiles*, playful ways.

29. *Hebe*, goddess of youth.

45. *in spite of*, in order to defy.

48. *twisted eglantine*, honeysuckle.

62. *dight*, dressed.

67. *tale*, number. Cf. *Sohrab and Rustum*, line 288.

80. *Cynosure*, centre of interest. The Cynosura, the stars composing the tail of the Lesser Bear, helped sailors to steer their courses.

83. Names of shepherds in pastoral poetry, as is *Thestylis* in line 88.

94. *rebecks*, fiddles with three strings.

102. *Faery Mab*. She sent dreams. See *Romeo and Juliet*, I, IV.

104. *Friar's lantern*, will o' the wisp.

105. *drudging Goblin*, Puck or Robin Goodfellow, who did the work.

113. *crop-full*, with well-filled stomach. *Cf.* Browning, "Irks care the crop-full bird."

125. *Hymen*, god of marriage.

132. *Ben Jonson* (1594–1637), the learned playwright.
sock, the symbol of comedy. Cf. *Il Penseroso*, line 102.

136. *Lydian airs*, tender music.

145. *Orpheus*. His music moved Pluto, the god of Hades, to set free his wife Eurydice. Orpheus was to lead her out of Hades without looking back. But he turned, and she had to go back to Pluto.

147. *Elysian*. Elysium was a place of beauty where the blessed spirits dwelt.

Il Penseroso

Notes

10. *Morpheus*, the god of dreams.

18. *Memnon's sister*, Hemera, noted for her beauty. The Ethiopians were dark-skinned.

19. *starr'd Ethiop queen*. Cassiopeia, wife of Cepheus, an Ethiopian king, boasted that she and her daughter Andromeda were more beautiful than the sea-nymphs. They were both turned into stars.

23. *Vesta*, goddess of the home.

24. *Saturn*, supposed to have introduced civilized life. The name is connected with melancholy.

29. *Ida*, Mount Ida, in Crete, where Jupiter was reared.

30. Saturn was deposed by his sons.

56. *Philomel*, the nightingale.

57. *plight*, melody.

59. *Cynthia*, the moon.

83. The watchman uttered charms to drive danger away.

88. *Hermes*, an Egyptian philosopher held to be the source of all knowledge.

99. *Thebes*, a city of ancient Greece, celebrated in history and drama, *Pelops*. His descendants were often called after him by the poets, and their history forms the theme of much Greek tragedy.

102. *buskin*, the high-heeled boot used by tragic actors to increase their height.

109. A reference to Chaucer's unfinished *Squire's Tale*.

159. *storied windows*, stained glass.

Exercises

1. "These two poems are studies of the same man in different moods." Discuss this statement.

2. Cite three parallels from these poems.

3. From *L'Allegro* describe "Morning," and from *Il Penseroso* describe "Evening."

4. What references are there in the poems to (*a*) Shakespeare, (*b*) Ben Jonson, (*c*) Orpheus?

5. Explain the nature of Milton's Puritanical pleasures.

6. Which poem strikes you as being nearer to the poet's heart?

MAC FLECKNOE

JOHN DRYDEN (1631–1700)

Dryden, the leading Tory poet of his day, wrote *Mac Flecknoe* in 1682 as an attack on Shadwell, the leading Whig poet. In the poem Dryden pours ridicule on Shadwell's plays, but it is well to remember that Dryden's twenty-eight plays are now forgotten. Shadwell, once the friend of Dryden, had taken Ben Jonson as his model, and had met with praise from Dryden,

> *For large ideas and a flowing pen,*
> *First of our times and second but to Ben.*

Times change: Dryden had spoken ill of Jonson, and Shadwell in return attacked Dryden's play *Aureng Zebe*. So it was that, in 1682,

Shadwell found himself the central figure of *Mac Flecknoe* and also as Og in *Absalom and Achitophel*.

Mac Flecknoe means "the son of Flecknoe," a dabbler in poetry and drama. One of his plays, *Love's Kingdom*, is mentioned in this poem, which, like most of Dryden's work in poetry, is satirical. "Satire is a sort of glass wherein beholders do generally discover everybody's face but their own," wrote Swift. Dryden is a master of the heroic couplet. His pen can pour forth invective, but little tenderness, a characteristic of his age. Not till he was fifty years of age did Dryden take to poetry, and then he produced works such as *Absalom and Achitophel*, which will never die. It was *Mac Flecknoe* that Pope took as the model for the *Dunciad*. As might be expected, *Mac Flecknoe* has much topical matter in its lines, but as a piece of satire it is representative of the satirical poetry of the Augustan period.

Notes

3. *Augustus.* He became master of Rome at thirty-three.

29. *Heywood and Shirley*, dramatists whose merits Dryden failed to see.

31. *dunce*, from Duns Scotus, a man of great learning, whose name later became a byword for ignorance.

33. *Norwich drugget*, cloth or worsted made in Norwich.

42. "Such a scene was not even played in your plays." Shadwell wrote a play called *Epsom Wells*.

49. Ariel was supposed to have charmed the fishes with music.

51. *St André*, a French dancing-master.

52. *Psyche*, an opera by Shadwell.

55. *Singleton*, musician and actor, was leader of the King's private band.

57. *Villerius*, a character in D'Avenant's *Siege of Rhodes*.

62. *Augusta*, the Roman town on the site of which London arose. Charles II was sometimes called Augustus.

63. Caused by the Plague, Fire, Popish plots, etc.

65. *hight*, called.

68. *nursery*, training school for actors.

71. *Maximins.* Maximin was hero of Dryden's *Tyrannic Love*.

72. *Fletcher*, the dramatist.

73. *Jonson.* Cf. *L'Allegro*, "Jonson's learned sock."

74. *Simkin*, cobbler. Shoemaking was called "the gentle craft."

76. *clinches*, puns.

77. *Panton*, a noted punster.

80. *Dekker*, the Elizabethan dramatist.

83. Here follow names of Shadwell's plays and characters.

93. *Ogleby.* He translated the *Iliad*.

96. *Herringman*, a bookseller.

115. *Love's Kingdom*, a play by Flecknoe.
142. *Gentle George*, Sir George Etherege, poet and [illegible]. Characters from his plays follow.
154. *Sedley*, Sir Charles Sedley, a wit, who wrote the prologue for Shadwell's *Epsom Wells*.
[illegible]

Exercises

1. Write a short essay on "Satire."
2. What are the merits and defects of this poem?
3. Which do you prefer, Augustan or Romantic poetry? Why?
4. Compare Dryden and Pope as poets. How do they reflect their age?

THE RAPE OF THE LOCK

Alexander Pope (1688–1744)

De Quincey describes *The Rape of the Lock* as "the most exquisite monument of playful fancy that universal literature offers," and Hazlitt calls it "the most exquisite piece of filigree work ever invented." It is an heroic-comical poem, bringing supernatural devices into common life and giving a strange brilliancy to the toilet-table. Trivial affairs assume great importance.

The story around which the poem is woven is that Lord Petre had cut off a lock of Miss Arabella Fermor's hair. A family quarrel thus arose. A Mr Caryll (the name is spelt with one 'l' in the poem), consulted Pope about the matter. Pope thereupon wrote a poem of two cantos, which was so well received that he added the sylphs and gnomes and extended it to five cantos in 1712. He also added the game of ombre and the Cave of Spleen. In fine, he made it a sort of epic, thus giving some reason for the inclusion of supernatural things. It is a typical poem of his art, giving many sidelights on the manners and customs of his time.

The introduction of the sylphs, gnomes, salamanders, and nymphs from the Rosicrucian theory add to the comical effect. Addison objected to this, and called down Pope's wrath on himself. Just as in the old sagas phantoms haunted the battlefields, so in this poem they enter into common life. They have affinities with those little creatures of the Queen Mab type who "creep into acorn cups." Ariel is a borrowing of Shakespeare's Ariel. Sir Leslie Stephen says that *The Rape of the Lock* "expresses in a most finished form the sentiment characteristic of a given social phase; one deficient in many of the most interesting

influences, but yet one in which arts of converse represent a very high development of shrewd sense refined into vivid wit."

Pope knew his powers and used them. He could always express his thought clearly and concisely. He aimed at being a correct poet, and his work shows the careful preparation of a conscientious craftsman. The story he tells was just suited to his pen and his vehicle, the heroic couplet.

Notes

Canto I

20. *Sylph*, earth, air, water, and fire were respectively inhabited by gnomes, sylphs, nymphs, and salamanders.

23. *birth-night*, anniversary ball on a royal birthday, noted for its elegance.

32. *silver token*, the fairies' payment.

44. *box*, at the opera.

the ring, where charms and graces were shown off on horseback.

56. *ombre*, a card game originating in Spain.

115. *Shock*, a dog. Cf. *Macbeth*, III, 1, 94, "shoughs."

Canto II

25. *springes*, snares.

38. *vast French romances*. One consisted of ten volumes, each of eight hundred pages.

79. *wandering orbs*, meteors.

103. *slight*, sleight.

105. *Diana's law*, chastity.

113. *drops*, pendants.

131. *styptics*, substances that stop bleeding.

133. *Ixion*. He was bound by Jupiter to a revolving wheel as a punishment.

139. *thrid*, thread.

Canto III

33. *Matadore*. *Cf.* Brewer: "In the game of ombre, Spadille (the ace of spades), Manille (the seven of trumps), and Basto (the ace of clubs) are called 'Matadores.'"

41. *succinct*, girded.

42. *halbert*, pole-axe.

61. *Pam*, knave of clubs.

62. *Loo*, a card-game in which Pam is the highest card.

92. *Codille*, ". . . when those who defend the pool make more tricks than those who defend the game, which is called winning the codille" (Boyle).

106. *mill*, coffee-mill.

165. *Atalantis*, a book of scandals, with the names of living people only slightly disguised.

Canto IV

16. *Spleen*, melancholy, ill-humour.
89. *Thalestris*, Mrs Morley, Sir Plume's sister.
121. *Sir Plume*, Sir George Brown, who took the matter seriously.
124. *clouded*, mottled.

Canto V

126. *Proculus*. He alone saw Romulus taken to the heavens on his death.

127. *Berenice*, wife of Ptolemy III of Egypt. Her hair, given as an offering to the war-gods, was stolen, and became the group of stars near the constellation Leo.

136. *Rosamond's lake*, an old lake in London, filled in in 1770, where many committed suicide.

137. *Partridge*, the almanac-maker, a favourite butt of the wits.

138. *Galileo's eyes*, the telescope.

Exercises

1. Write a short essay on "The Age of Pope," with this poem as your basis.
2. Outline the story of *The Rape of the Lock*.
3. "A mock-heroic epic." Discuss this as applied to *The Rape of the Lock*.
4. Compare the heroic couplet with lyric metres.
5. Discuss the validity of the use of the supernatural in this poem.
6. Give five well-known quotations from *The Rape of the Lock*.

ELEGY WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

THOMAS GRAY (1716–71)

Few men with such a store of learning and such powers of expression have left so little writing behind them as Gray has done. "He has marched into fame with a few pieces of poetry." It may be that he was born in the wrong age, for he is a poet of strong Romantic tendencies, though he actually lived in the Transition period. He said that any excellences in his poetry were due to the influence of Dryden.

The *Elegy* (1749) had been seven years in hand; in 1750 Gray published it with several alterations. The feelings and thoughts expressed in the poem are permanent and universal. There is nothing exceptional, for Gray is the singer of the humble, poor, neglected singers of the hamlet. Indeed, the poem could have been inspired by any country churchyard.

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The *Elegy* [illegible]

: has a simple philosophy and a calmness of emotion. "To what reatness might these villagers have aspired?" is the poet's theme. round this he has built a word-perfect poem which has become part of our language, full of sympathy, sincerity, and simplicity.)r Johnson, whose *Life of Gray* is one of the weakest in his *Lives* *the Poets*, admitted that the *Elegy* "abounds with images which nd a mirror in every mind and with sentiments to which every bosom :turns an echo," and that is why the *Elegy* is read to-day.

Notes

1. *curfew*, the bell giving the signal to extinguish fires and lights. was introduced by the Normans.

12. *reign*, realm.

13ff. In Gray's time the rich were buried in elaborate tombs inside ıe church. It is not on these that Gray reflects.

57. John Hampden, in 1636, refused to pay the ship-money tax :vied by the King without Parliamentary authority.

73. Gray had intended ending the *Elegy* with this stanza:

> No more with reason and thyself at strife
> Give anxious thoughts and endless wishes room;
> But through the cool sequestered vale of life
> Pursue the silent tenour of thy doom.

Exercises

1. What are the leading thoughts in the *Elegy*?
2. Discuss Gray's affinity with Romanticism.
3. Write an appreciation of the *Elegy*.
4. Give six well-known quotations from the *Elegy*. What novel as words from this poem as its title?
5. "In the *Elegy* mediocrity said its own true word." Discuss this riticism.
6. Compare the theme of the poem with that of *The Cotter's Saturday Night*.

THE BARD

Thomas Gray (1716–71)

Gray was the first of our poets to speak of Welsh poetry. Wales has ɪng been noted for her bards, and to-day the chief ceremony in the Velsh National Eisteddfod is the crowning of the bard.

The Bard, published in 1757, is based on the tradition that the Welsh ırds were murdered in Anglesea. The poem is constructed on the reek model of Pindar's odes (see Livingstone's *Pageant of Greece*). indar's odes were elaborate choral pieces in honour of athletic victories. here are three parts in the ode, a structure that Gray, unlike many

other poets, has observed in *The Bard.* The strophe gives the pronouncement of the curse; the antistrophe shows that it is against Edward I; the epode gives a prophecy of the glory to come.

Gray's odes were not well received, being declared obscure and too difficult for the English eye and ear to appreciate. They show Gray's touch of Romanticism.

Notes

5. *hauberk*, a coat of mail. Originally it was a cover for neck and shoulders.

11. In 1283.

13. *Gloster*, Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester, who conducted the war in South Wales.

14. *Mortimer*, Roger de Mortimer, one of the King's helpers in North Wales.

28. Llewellyn seems here to be taken for a bard. The other names are of bards, except Modred, who appears in Arthurian legend as Mordred.

57. *She-wolf of France*, Isabella, daughter of Philip IV of France, Queen of Edward II.

87. Cæsar was supposed to have built the oldest part of the Tower of London.

121. *Taliessin*, a bard of the sixth century.

Exercises

1. Discuss the structure of this ode.

2. From *The Bard* and the *Elegy written in a Country Churchyard* show that Gray was a Romantic in temperament.

3. Gray said that the style he aimed at was "extreme conciseness of expression, yet pure, perspicuous, and musical." Illustrate this from his poems.

THE DESERTED VILLAGE

Oliver Goldsmith (1728–74)

Goldsmith brought to an age which had little outstanding poetry an emotion and a sincerity that had long been absent. His treatment of the heroic couplet introduced fine descriptions of nature and warm human characters who seem to step out from the text and mingle with the reader.

He did not like the growth of towns, and concentrates on the sad parting of the emigrants, not looking at the joys of a new life. Like Burns, he felt the sadness of the struggling farmer, and found him being driven from his land by the system of enclosures. Scenes he had known were

losing their glamour, and his sorrow is mixed with indignation at the extinction of "a bold peasantry, their country's pride."

He modelled the poem on Johnson's *London*, but it has more life and emotion than that poem, and certainly has a wider appeal.

Notes

1. *Auburn*, probably Lissoy, Goldsmith's native village in Ireland.

53. Burns was influenced by this poem. Cf. *The Cotter's Saturday Night*, line 165.

140 ff. This famous portrait might have been suggested by his father and his brother, to whom he dedicated *The Traveller*. The words "with an income of forty pounds a year" appear in the "Dedication to the Rev. Henry Goldsmith."

209. *tides*, times.

210. *gauge*, measure vessels.

232. *The twelve good rules*, according to Hales, were: 1. Urge no healths. 2. Profane no divine ordinances. 3. Touch no State matters. 4. Reveal no secrets. 5. Pick no quarrels. 6. Make no companions. 7. Maintain no ill opinion. 8. Keep no bad company. 9. Encourage no vice. 10. Make no long meals. 11. Respect no grievances. 12. Lay no wagers.

game of goose. This was played on a board on which at every fourth and fifth compartment a goose was depicted.

305. The Enclosure Acts cut off the land from the peasants. "Seven hundred such Acts were passed from 1760 to 1774" (Whiteford).

Exercises

1. Quote the lines describing (*a*) the preacher, (*b*) the schoolmaster.
2. Give an account of the country as Goldsmith saw it.
3. Quote three similes, and paraphrase them.
4. "Goldsmith's couplet is more pleasing than Pope's because of its humaneness." Discuss this.
5. Compare the themes of *The Deserted Village* and *The Cotter's Saturday Night*.
6. Write an appreciation of *The Deserted Village*.

THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT

Robert Burns (1759–96)

This poem was inscribed to Aiken, a warm friend of the poet, who wrote of him: "A warmer heart death ne'er made cold." It is of the same mood as Gray's "short but simple annals of the poor," but it is a fresh and original poetic achievement, with sincerity ringing through it.

It is a record of a pious race who revere home-life. Not is the picture overdrawn. "The household life of Burns's parents is represented in *The Cotter's Saturday Night*, and the origin of those stanzas finely exhibits the continued presence of early salutary influences amid the tumultuous passions of the poet's heart."

Burns is a poet of the people, simple and sincere. The language of this poem is partly English and partly the dialect of Ayrshire, the poem being written in Spenserian stanzas.

Notes

A *cotter* is a small farmer, often a sub-tenant, renting a cottage and a few acres of land.

10. *sugh*, sigh of the wind.
13. *craws*, crows.
15. *moil*, drudgery.
21. *stacher*, stagger.
22. *flichterin'*, fluttering.
23. *ingle*, fire.
28. *belyve*, soon.
30. *ca'*, drive.
    tentie rin, diligently run.
31. *cannie*, easy.
35. *her sair-won penny fee*, her hard-won wages. *fee*, hire.
38. *spiers*, asks
40. *uncos*, things not known, news.
44. *gars*, makes.
    amaist, almost.
47. *younkers*, youngsters.
48. *eydent*, delight.
49 *fauk*, trifle
59 *wily*, knowing.
62. *hafflins*, half and half, partly.
64. *ben*, the inner part of the house.
67. *cracks*, talks.
    kye, cattle.
69 *blate*, bashful.
    laithfu', shy.
72. *lave*, rest
93. *sowpe*, milk.
    Hawkie, cow with a white face.
94. *hallan*, partition.
96 *weel-hained*, carefully preserved.
    kebbuck, cheese.
    fell, tasty.
99 How it was a twelvemonth since the flax was in flower.

103. *ha'-Bible*, large Bible kept in the ha' or chief room.

105. *lyart*, grey.
haffets, temples.

107. *wales*, chooses.

111–113. *Dundee*, *Martyrs*, *Elgin*, names of Scottish psalm-tunes.

133–135. This line refers to St John the Divine, who wrote the Book of Revelation.

166. Pope, *Essay on Man*, Epistle IV, line 248.

Exercises

1. Outline the argument of *The Cotter's Saturday Night*.
2. Describe the cotter's home-life.
3. "From scenes like these, old Scotia's grandeur springs." Discuss this in relation to the Scottish character.
4. "It is as a poet of humanity that we remember Burns." Write a short essay on this theme.

LINES COMPOSED A FEW MILES ABOVE TINTERN ABBEY

William Wordsworth (1770–1850)

The *Lines composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey* is Wordsworth's most important contribution to the *Lyrical Ballads* of 1798. In this poem he ignores his theory that poetry should be written "in a selection of language actually used by men." He proves to us that nature gives him an ecstasy, a sublime feeling of the almighty power. He is a lover of the meadows and the woods. Nature is able to give solace to the soul and to foster tenderness: she can lead us nearer the divine. The sights and sounds of nature give the poet memories that will serve him in solitude and cheer him in sadness. The older he grows the deeper grows his intense joy in the beauty of the universe, for

> Nature never did betray
> The heart that loved her.

Wordsworth believed that poetry should instruct. "Every great poet is a teacher: I wish either to be considered as a teacher, or as nothing," he wrote in a letter to Beaumont. It is the religious aspect that is emphasized in his interpretation of nature. He is seldom fanciful, for in all his work he aims at reality. He is essentially a poet of the open air. In *Hart-Leap Well* he expresses the character of his work in a few lines:

> The moving accident is not my trade:
> To freeze the blood I have no ready arts:
> 'Tis my delight, alone in summer shade,
> To pipe a simple song for thinking hearts.

Notes

Tintern Abbey lies amid grand and picturesque scenery on the banks of the river Wye, in Monmouthshire.

11. *orchard-tufts*, clusters of fruit-trees.

14. *aching joys*, an oxymoron. *Cf.* "bitter sweet."

93–102. Important lines showing Wordsworth's beliefs.

95. *a sense sublime*, a deep feeling.

114. *thou*, Dorothy Wordsworth, his sister, who was his constant companion, and, like her brother, a lover of nature. In 1832 a serious illness affected her intellect.

Exercises

1. How does this poem show Wordsworth's ideas on nature?
2. Write an appreciation of the poem.
3. Quote and explain the lines:

> And I have felt
> A presence that disturbs me with the joy . . .
> And rolls through all things.

LAODAMIA

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH (1770–1850)

The Greek legend about Laodamía, the daughter of Acastus and wife of Protesiláus, is the basis of this poem. Her husband was slain before Troy, thus fulfilling the prophecy that the first to set foot on Trojan soil should instantly be slain. She begged the gods that she might be permitted to see him once more, and was given permission to talk to him for the space of three hours. Hermes, when the request was granted, brought Protesiláus back to the upper world. Protesiláus, after the allotted time, died again, and with him died Laodamía.

The poem was inspired by Virgil, and Wordsworth said, "It cost me more trouble than almost anything of equal length I have ever written." It has a Stoic moral, and is severe in its philosophy. Self must be annulled, and we must

> Learn by a mortal yearning to ascend—
> Seeking a higher object.

But, amid failure, "tears to human suffering are due." By fortitude only can we seek the higher things of life.

Notes

19. *Hermes*, called Mercurius by the Romans, was the herald o[f the] gods. He was able to travel with the rapidity of wind.

43. *Delphic Oracle*. In the temple of Apollo was the Delphic Or[acle]

which was consulted by a priestess named Pythia. She exhaled the vapour which arose from a hole in the ground, and her words contained the revelations of Apollo.

65. *Parcæ*, the Fates.

66. *Stygian*. The Styx was the principal river in Hades, across which Charon ferried the dead. Hence "stygian hue" means the "hue of death."

71. *Erebus* signifies darkness. It is the space through which the shades pass into Hades.

Exercises

1. What are Wordsworth's main ideas in *Laodamía*?
2. Which poem do you prefer, *Tintern Abbey* or *Laodamía*? Why?
3. Describe the legend of Laodamía. How far has Wordsworth used it in this poem?

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834)

The *Lyrical Ballads* of 1798, which included *The Ancient Mariner*, marked the starting-point proper of the Romantic Revival. Coleridge was to treat of "characters supernatural or at least romantic"; Wordsworth was to "give the charm of novelty to things of everyday life," and to call attention to "the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us."

The Ancient Mariner was founded on a dream, but much is of Coleridge's own invention. He says that he gained some of the ideas from Shelvocke's *Voyages*. Poetry was but one of Coleridge's pursuits, and his work is often fragmentary and (like *Christabel*) unfinished. His mind was ever giving him deep thoughts, but it was, said Southey, "eternal activity without action." He can feel deeply and give you word-pictures full of melody and force.

The metre of *The Ancient Mariner* is the common ballad stanza of four lines, of which the second and the fourth rhyme. Sometimes the verse is extended to six lines, the sixth rhyming with the second and the fourth. One verse has nine lines. Though the poem is in ballad form, there are differences from the ordinary ballad. It is longer than a ballad, and possesses more psychological interest than a ballad; it has much natural description.

The poem begins in the uncanny and ends in the uncanny. One of the few great sea-poems we possess, it aims at displaying the psychological development of the mariner rather than at telling a story. You will note that Coleridge does not attempt the impossible task of describing the mariner, but suggests a picture, and you certainly have him in your mind's eye all the time.

Notes

11. *loon*, low fellow. *Cf. Macbeth*, "Thou cream-faced loon"

12. *eftsoons*, soon after, immediately. Spenser uses the word, which is now archaic, in *Prothalamion*, line 55.

61. *swound*, swoon.

64. *thorough*, through. *Cf.* Puck's "Thorough bush, thorough briar."

76. *vespers nine*, nine evenings.

98. *uprist*, uprose. *Cf. Canterbury Tales* (in the *Knight's Tale*), "And in the gardyn, at the sonne up-riste."

128. *death-fires*, corpse-candles or dead men's candles foretelling death. These were phosphorescent lights seen in the tropical seas.

152. *wist*, knew. Anglo-Saxon *witan*, "to know."

178. *Heaven's mother*, the Virgin Mary.

245. *or*, ere, before.

297. *silly*, useless.

489. *holy rood*, the Cross.

535. *ivy-tod*, bush of ivy.

Exercises

1. Show how Coleridge sustains our interest in the supernatural in this poem.

2. What is the moral of the ballad? Does it help or hinder the poem?

3. Give six well-known quotations from the poem.

4. Name three great supernatural poems in our language. Compare [illegible]

THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

Lord Byron (1788–1824)

This poem was written in 1816, when Byron knew very little about Bonnivard. It was inspired by the sight of the dungeon where, for six years, Bonnivard had been imprisoned for a political matter. There is little resemblance between Byron's hero and the historical figure, nor were there any brothers with the captive. Later Byron wrote his famous sonnet on Bonnivard, *The Castle of Chillon*, which opens with those well-known lines:

> Eternal Spirit of the chainless Mind!
> Brightest in dungeons, Liberty, thou art.

The Prisoner of Chillon is not one of Byron's greatest works, having several lapses, but it shows his vigour and force. Here is seen, as well, the influence of Scott, Wordsworth, and Coleridge, whom Byron derided when he thought fit. William Morris called Byron "the greatest literary power of this century." However much we disagree with that nineteenth-century criticism, one thing is certain—he is a fighter, loving conflict, and loving liberty, for which he ultimately gave his life. "Who would be free, themselves must strike a blow."

Notes

45. *score*, count—a notch or mark for keeping count.
251. Just as the Ancient Mariner is saved by the play of the fishes, so is the Prisoner's heart awakened by the song of the bird.
294. *Cf.* Wordsworth, *The Daffodils*.
331. A typical Wordsworthian line.

Exercises

1. "Byron is a poet of liberty." Discuss this.
2. Relate the story of the poem.
3. Compare the ideas of *The Castle of Chillon* and *The Prisoner of Chillon*.
4. In what ways does Byron use nature in this poem?
5. Does Byron succeed in picturing the wretchedness of the Prisoner?

ADONAIS

Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792–1822)

Keats died at Rome in 1821, and Shelley, who was then living at Pisa, lamented his early death in this beautiful elegy, the name of which he adapted from Adonis. Shelley was indignant because he had heard that Keats was "snuff'd out" by the critics, to whom he refers several times in *Adonais*. Keats himself wrote, "My own criticism has given me pain without comparison beyond what *Blackwood* or the *Quarterly* could possibly inflict; and also, when I feel I am right, no external praise can give me such a glow as my own solitary reperception and ratification of what is fine."

The poem, written in Spenserian stanzas, is full of emotion, beauty, and grandeur, and is used by Shelley to express his thoughts on life and death. Melody joins hands with deep thought, creating a lovely poem—so lovely, indeed, that it is hard for the mind to encompass its charm.

Death?

> Peace! peace! he is not dead, he doth not sleep—
> He hath awakened from the dream of life.

The throb of emotion, the sorrow for a great lover of beauty, mark this a great poem. Where imagination could lead Shelley, there he soared.

Shelley had close acquaintance with the epitaph on Bion attributed to Moschus, and this influenced *Adonais*. The world did not understand Shelley: few poets live till they have been dead a century. In [illegible]

"its dying last monotony."

Notes

12. *Urania*, the spiritual goddess described by Plato, not the Muse of Astronomy. Milton makes her the spirit of poetry.

32. *liberticide*, slayer of liberty.

36. The others may be Homer and Virgil or Homer and Dante.

48. A reference to Keats's *Isabella*.

94. *anadem*, a headband.

97. *reeds*, arrows.

107. *clips*, embraces.

141. Narcissus fell in love with his own reflection, and after death was transformed into a flower.

160. *brere*, briar.

179. *the intense atom*, the mind.

191. *Mother*, Urania.

238. A reference to the critics.

264. *Pilgrim of Eternity*, Byron, who, however, was not present at the death of Keats; only Joseph Severn, a painter, who had accompanied Keats to Italy, was there.

267. Shelley thought Byron a grander man than he was, for Byron said of Keats,

> 'Tis strange the mind, that fiery particle,
> Should let itself be snuff'd out by an article

(*Don Juan*, Canto XI, Stanza lx). There are also the lines beginning, "Who killed John Keats?"

268. *Ierne*, Ireland, a reference to Moore.

276. *Actaeon-like* The hunter Actaeon was changed into a stag and devoured by his own hounds.

307–315. This stanza refers to Leigh Hunt, who was one of Keats's closest friends.

399–404. Chatterton, Sidney, and Lucan all died young. Keats dedicated *Endymion* to Chatterton's memory

439 ff. Keats was buried in the Protestant cemetery at Rome

Exercises

1. Show how Shelley gives his views on life and death in *Adonais*.
2. To what various things is Keats compared?
3. Compare the central thought of *Adonais* with that of *Lycidas*.
4. " *Adonais* is an imaginative flight rather than an intellectual performance." Discuss this.
5. Write a few lines on each of the poets mentioned in the poem.
6. Select three striking passages and paraphrase them.

THE EVE OF ST AGNES

John Keats (1795–1821)

The festival of St Agnes, a Roman maiden who was martyred at the age of twelve in A.D. 303, during the rule of Diocletian, is on January 21. Her symbol is a lamb (Latin, *agnus*). It was believed that on the eve of her festival maidens who carried out certain rites would see their future husbands in dreams.

As with most of Keats's poetry, we look through "magic casements." Romance is around us in this medieval atmosphere. The poem is adorned with richness of colour, though it lacks vigour. It shows the influence of Spenser, and shows, too, that Keats is an artist in words and ideas. Here he is the creator of things of beauty, which he found at one with truth. Throughout the poem it will be noticed that the cold and the storm are contrasted with the warmth and comfort of Madeline's chamber.

Notes

5. *Beadsman*, " prayers-man."
12. *meagre*, weak.
31. *chide*, utter cries.
37. *argent*, gleaming.
revelry, revellers.
52. *supine*, lying on the back.
70. *amort*, unconscious.
117. *St Agnes' wool.* Two lambs were blessed annually on St Agnes' Day, and their wool was then offered up.
120. *witch's sieve.* It kept out water. Cf. *Macbeth*, I, iii, "But in a sieve I'll thither sail."
126. *mickle*, much.
133. *brook*, refrain from.
173. *cates*, choice food.
174. *tambour frame*, circular frame for stretching material for embroidery.

216. *shielded scutcheon.* This is, strictly, tautological, for a scutcheon is an heraldic shield.

218. *gules*, red, an heraldic term.

237. *poppied.* Opium is obtained from the poppy.

241. *missal*, Roman Catholic book of prayers.
swart Paynims, dark heathens

251. The mention of carpet is an anachronism.

257. *Morphean amulet*, sleep charm of Morpheus, the god of dreams.

277. *eremite*, hermit. *Cf.* Keats's "Like Nature's patient, sleepless eremite."

288. *woofed*, interwoven.

292. *La belle dame sans mercy.* A fifteenth-century French poem by Alain Chartier. Keats wrote his poem of the same name in 1819.

377. *aves*, prayers to the Virgin.

Exercises

1. What is a Spenserian stanza? Quote one. What other poems in this book are in the same metre?
2. Say whether you think that this poem sustains Keats's theme "Beauty is truth, truth beauty."
3. Write a short essay on "The Medieval Atmosphere in *The Eve of St Agnes*."
4. Give an account of the opening and the close of the poem.
5. What is the story of the poem? Does it agree with the legend connected with St Agnes' Eve?
6. Describe (*a*) Madeline, (*b*) "the aged creature."

THE ARMADA

LORD MACAULAY (1800–59)

Every one knows the story of the Spanish Armada. Macaulay here puts it into verse, and as a story-teller in verse "he had no superior in his generation." His *Lays of Ancient Rome*, like this poem, carry the reader along. There is little philosophy or deep thought in the poem; there should be none. You move along with the rhythm and join in the story, and that is the mark of greatness in ballad poetry

Exercises

1. Account for the popularity of Macaulay's poetry.
2. Compare the sea-poems you find in this book.
3. Relate, with quotations, the story of the poem.

MORTE D'ARTHUR

LORD TENNYSON (1809–92)

The Arthurian legend figures prominently in our literature. Sir Thomas Malory's prose version of the legend (1472) was used by Tennyson for his sources; Malory in turn had help from the work of Geoffrey of Monmouth. It is well to read the *Morte d'Arthur* side by side with Malory. Here are two examples from Malory:

> What saw you there? said the King. Sir, he said, I saw nothing but the waters wappe and the waves wanne.
>
> Then he threw the sword as far into the water as he might: And there came an arm and an hand above the water and met it and caught it and so shook it thrice and brandished and then vanished away the hand with the sword into the water.

King Arthur is supposed to have lived about the sixth century and to have formed a band of knights of equal rank who sat at the Round Table. The knights vowed themselves to honour and chastity and "to ride abroad redressing human wrongs." They searched for the Holy Grail, the cup used by the Lord at the Last Supper. Only Sir Galahad achieved the quest. The knights fell from grace, "the latest left of all the knights" being Sir Bedivere. In the last battle Arthur received a mortal wound, and was carried to the lake, whence he was taken "to the island-valley of Avilion."

This poem is a fine example of Tennyson's powers. He himself believed firmly in the moral and spiritual power of poetry. He said: "There is something better than art for art's sake, and that is art for man's sake."

NOTES

4. *Lyonnesse*, a submerged land (traditional) between Land's End and the Scilly Isles.

21. *Camelot*, the capital town of King Arthur.

23. *Merlin*, the wizard and enchanter.

139. *a streamer of the northern morn*, the Aurora Borealis, streamers of light sometimes seen in the northern skies.

140. *moving isles of winter*, icebergs.

215. *greaves*, *cuisses*, armour for the legs and thighs.

259. *Avilion*, or *Avalon*. This may be Glastonbury in Somerset or some western isle. It means "the island of apples."

EXERCISES

1. Describe (*a*) Excalibur, (*b*) the departure of Arthur.
2. Give examples from the poem of (*a*) similes, (*b*) onomatopœia, (*c*) descriptive adjectives.
3. Relate the story of the poem and compare it with Malory's version.

THE LOTOS-EATERS

Lord Tennyson (1809–92)

The incident upon which Tennyson bases this poem occurs in the *Odyssey* of Homer, Book IX. The ship of Odysseus reached the land of the Lotophagi, where grew the lotos-tree. Two of the crew were given the fruit of the lotos to eat by the natives, but Odysseus got them away so that all his men should not be infected, for all who ate of this fruit entered into forgetfulness, lost all their aspirations, and drifted along in dreamful ease.

These lotos-eaters have had enough of action. Why should they try to progress?

> Death is the end of life; ah, why
> Should life all labour be?

The poem is in strong contrast to *Ulysses*, the hero of which will "drink life to the lees." With him "some work of noble note may yet be done," a much truer philosophy than that of the lotos-eaters, who would ruin any world.

The Lotos-eaters is a splendid example of Tennyson's power of word-music and melody, and shows how susceptible he was to natural beauty.

Notes

Exercises

1. "A wonderful sense of melody is shown in *The Lotos-eaters*." Do you agree? Give reasons for your opinion.
2. How does Tennyson give pictures of dreamful ease? Give quotations to illustrate your answer.
3. What reflections on life and death do you find here?

ANDREA DEL SARTO

Robert Browning (1812–89)

Andrea del Sarto ("Son of the Tailor") was a famous painter who lived from 1486 to 1531. He married Lucrezia in 1512. He had spent money entrusted to him for the purchase of pictures for the King of France on his wife, with whom he was infatuated. She deserted him later.

In this poem he is shown as a painter whose disposition is the cause of his failures. He has no passionate energy, and is without that fire that burns in artistic souls. His wife tolerates him for his money, and one can only feel sorrow for this artist who could have done much if he had had some one to direct his gaze to the stars.

Kenyon wrote to Browning asking for a copy of a painting by Andrea, and Browning, not being able to get a copy, wrote this poem instead. He took the story from Vasari's *Lives of the Illustrious Painters,* where the writer pictures Lucrezia as a mean, selfish, and subtle woman. She was of great physical beauty, but Browning paints her as sensual and garish. Browning was intensely interested in art, and in his poems he takes a moment in the life of the artist and from it deduces the whole life. It is not enough to have sensuous beauty, you must have soul besides—that is the teaching of the poem.

Notes

15. *Fiesole*, a small town near Florence.

78. The higher the ideal, the less the certainty of attainment. Cf. *The Grammarian's Funeral.*

93. *Morello*, a hill of the Apennines.

96–97. A man must always strive; one can touch higher than one can grasp.

104. *Urbinate*, Rafael Santi (1483–1520), usually known as Raphael, a great painter and a man of a lovable nature.

129. *Angelo*, Michelangelo (1475–1564), painter, sculptor, and architect.

149. *Fontainebleau.* Here was one of the chief residences of the French kings.

172. Love was to be the greatest triumph.

177. Rafael painted mostly in Rome; hence "the Roman's."

209. *cue-owls*, common birds in the Mediterranean lands.

240. *scudi*, crowns.

262. *Leonard*, Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519), painter and sculptor.

Exercises

1. What has Browning to say on "Life" in this poem?

2. Write an essay on "Ideals and Achievements," giving quotations from *Andrea del Sarto.*

3. Explain:

(*a*) Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,
Or what's a Heaven for?

(*b*) And thus we half-men struggle.

(*c*) Love, we are in God's hand.

NOTES AND EXERCISES

BY THE FIRE-SIDE

Robert Browning (1812–89)

In Browning's work there is a constant reminder that triumphs and glories are all very well, but "Love is best." In this poem there creeps in the life of Mr and Mrs Browning, perfect in its love and intimacy. Nothing could mar their happiness.

> O thou soul of my soul, I shall clasp thee again,
> And with God be the rest!

he concludes one poem. Throughout *By the Fire-side* memories of days when they had wandered in the woods come back to the poet in the winter evening. His wife must be with him in all his life, emotional and intellectual.

> And I must feel your brain prompt mine,

and so they can help each other to feel "new depths of the divine." Man has "two soul sides"; one to show the world and one, the nobler, for his own fire-side. Few greater tributes have been paid to a woman than Browning pays his wife here.

Notes

64. *freaked.* *Cf* Milton, *Lycidas*, line 144, "the pansy freak'd with jet."

73. The soft part rotted away from the hemp-stalks.

95. The year 569.

101. *Leonor*, possibly suggested by Beethoven's opera *Fidelio*.

110. *bem*, the end of life

185. *chrysolite*, a precious stone varying in colour from pale yellow to dark green

230. Nearness is not enough; you must "join two lives."

262. The life of love makes a gain for earth and heaven.

Exercises

1. Quote three tributes to Mrs Browning from *By the Fire-side*. What do you know of Mrs Browning?
2. "Life, I know not what thou art," said a poet. How would Browning answer that remark?
3. Is Browning's optimism evident in *By the Fire-side*?

SOHRAB AND RUSTUM

MATTHEW ARNOLD (1822–88)

This poem is based on an episode in the *Shah Nameh*, or *Book of Kings*, a Persian epic written by Firdausi toward the end of the tenth century. The story unfolds itself as the poem moves along. Arnold said that he had taken a great deal of trouble to Orientalize the similes, because "I thought they looked strange and jarred, if western." It is not necessary to attempt to identify the Oriental names, which are included to give the Eastern atmosphere. One should try to appreciate the beauty of the poem, direct in its simplicity and lightened by similes.

Arnold as a poet is "more classical in form than any other English poet except Milton." His chief models were the Greeks and Goethe and Wordsworth. *Sohrab and Rustum* is written in blank verse of much dignity, and is one of the most popular of English poems.

NOTES

115. *frore*, frozen.

268. *spine*, crest or peak.

288. *tale*, number. *Cf.* "And every shepherd tells his tale" (*L'Allegro*, line 67).

452. *autumn-star*, Sirius, the dog-star, reputed of evil influence.

497. *shore*, cut, sheared.

570. *glass*, reflect.

596. *bruited up*, reported.

679. *griffin*, a fabulous monster with the body of a lion and the head and wings of an eagle.

EXERCISES

1. Describe the fight between Sohrab and Rustum.
2. Give six examples of the Eastern atmosphere of the poem.
3. "A wonderful selection of similes." Justify this statement.
4. Give your reasons for liking or disliking this poem.
5. Wherein rests the greatness of this poem?
6. Write an appreciation of *Sohrab and Rustum*.

THERE IS A HILL BESIDE THE SILVER THAMES

ROBERT BRIDGES (1844–1930)

Before he produced *The Testament of Beauty* in his eighty-fifth year, Dr Bridges was most widely known by some immortal lyrics. He has always loved beauty in the lives of men and in nature. He has sought

and found beauty everywhere. He can also face the problems of life, and is closely in touch with the things that matter. He has his own standards of poetry, and has added glory to the office of Poet Laureate.

The poem we have selected is a lovely example of his lyrical work in an unusual metre. It explains itself, with its atmosphere of calm and nature-love. Solitude rules in this bower, with Beauty as her mate. What greater expression could one have than "odorous pine"?

Notes

22. *myosote*, the forget-me-not.
30. *nenuphars*, water-lilies.

Exercises

1. Write a short account of the mood of this poem.
2. Give a word-picture of (*a*) the angler, (*b*) the shepherd.
3. What flowers are mentioned here?

THE CHILD AND THE MARINER

W. H. Davies (*b.* 1871-1940)

W. H. Davies has told us his exciting adventures in his *Autobiography of a Super-tramp*; in *The Child and the Mariner* there is more autobiography. The poem is a fine example of character-study of an intensely interesting nature. There is the delight that is found in all Davies's work, though at times sorrow claims a place in his poetry, for his life was for long a hard struggle, and only courage brought him through

He is best known as a lyric poet, and it is clear that Wordsworth

and imagination, but none the less real. And the grandfather is no uncommon soul, for he exists, and we have all met him.

Exercises

1. Describe, with quotation, the grandfather and his possessions.
2. Describe, with quotation, the character of the Mariner.
3. What tales did the Mariner relate?

THE LAST COACHLOAD

WALTER DE LA MARE (*b.* 1873)

Mr de la Mare is a poet with a wonderful sense of melody, and, besides, he is a thinker. His poems are not the expression of a theme of the passing moment, but are concerned with the permanent things, for he believes that poetry is not a pretty embroidery on the hem of life, but is life itself. He loves to dwell amid dreams, ghosts, problems of life and death, facts and fancies. He is "saturated with youth and poetry." Children claim a special place in his heart, and he has something for the child and the older child who has not lost his sense of beauty. His work shows intense imagination, and is the product of a deep thinker.

The Last Coachload is a poem with beautiful phrasing; you can see each picture clearly defined. Every line tells its own tale, then, after you have pondered over the poem, another light begins to dawn on you. Who is this ancient coachman and what the coach?

NOTES

2. *felloe*, felly, the part between the spokes and the tire of a cart-wheel.

20. *yaffle*, the green woodpecker, an onomatopœic word.

EXERCISES

1. What is the theme of *The Last Coachload*?
2. Give six examples of 'pictures' from this poem.
3. How do the pictures of nature and animals help the poem?

THE HARE

WILFRID GIBSON (*b.* 1878)

One cannot miss the beauty and the force of Mr Gibson's poetry, nor can one miss his love of beauty. "Beauty dies not, though you blast and lay it waste." Life is a thing to enjoy is the poet's message, and he finds his enjoyment in nature, which he knows so intimately, and in human nature, in which he can always find, beneath a rugged exterior, the soul of beauty and glory.

Mr Gibson finds his themes everywhere, in the mill, the mine, on the moor, or in the dell. Mankind in all its moods interests him intensely, and his poems have the great merit of being very readable and interest-

ing, sustaining the dramatic interest from beginning to end. Many poems concern "the friendly folk" he knew in his beloved Northumberland, and he has taken them as they are, and from their apparently humdrum lives he has gathered the materials from which he has woven poems. He will not merely hope in future things. Joy is now.

> Every dawn's a golden key
> To unlock my treasury—
> Heaven here and now for me.

In *The Hare* the atmosphere is created in the opening lines. Then the story moves on, nature giving way to human nature. The fear of the hare puts the reader into the correct frame of mind to realize the fear that follows. One is struck in Mr Gibson's verse with the ease of the rhythm; it seems so natural, and just what should follow surely follows. The characters say what you would expect them to say. Underneath the narrative lies his message. Mr Gibson's love of humanity will show many readers for years to come glimpses of those emotions that govern the workaday world.

Exercises

1. Describe the story of *The Hare*.
2. "Wilfrid Gibson is a lover of nature and human nature." Discuss this statement.
3. What examples of expressions which seem to come of their own accord can be found in *The Hare*?

THE BARREL-ORGAN

Alfred Noyes (*b.* 1880)

Mr Noyes is well known as a writer of musical verse. Some of his poems go with a swing and fine rhythm, and yet give the reader something to ponder over. In other poems thought predominates, though we are still charmed by the musical language in which it is clothed The *Torch-bearers* is a series of poems which illustrates this, science forming the theme of the poems. *Linnaeus* is a particularly fine example from this series.

In *The Barrel-organ*—so ordinary an instrument, yet the bringer of welcome music to some souls—one notes how the rhythm changes "like a prismatic glass," and glides away into the melody of that lovely lyric "Come down to Kew." This is a happy poem, through which you can swing your way with ease and great pleasure. Not all poets can give you a melodiously told story as Mr Noyes can—read *The*

Highwayman. Note in *The Barrel-organ* the different moods, the subtle changes to suit the sense.

EXERCISES

1. Show how the poet uses different metres in *The Barrel-organ* Quote examples.
2. Quote (*a*) melodious lines from the poem, (*b*) the refrain.
3. What does the poet say of life and people in the city?

THE FISH

RUPERT BROOKE (1887–1915)

The early death of Rupert Brooke, one of those "buds nipp'd by an envious worm," took away a singer and a lover of beauty. He died on War service, at Scyros, in 1915, but he left behind him more than the mere signs of poetic promise. The War took toll of fine men like Edward Thomas, who prophesied that Rupert Brooke would be "not a little poet." Though these men have reached their journey's end, they have left glimpses of their thoughts and feelings. No nation can afford to lose such men as Rupert Brooke, of whom it has been finely said, "only the echoes and the memory remain, but they will linger."

In *The Fish* the poet tries to look at things from the point of view of a fish. He describes its "fluctuant mutable world." It is a difficult task. Another poem, named *Heaven,* where fish "ponder deep wisdom," should be compared with this poem.

NOTE

26. *hyaline*, transparency.

EXERCISES

1. How does the poet depict the life of a fish?
2. Write a criticism of the poem. Does *The Fish* succeed in its aim?
3. Give an account of the life of Rupert Brooke. What, in your opinion, is his greatest poetic achievement?